

left the church, and mounting his horse, he was soon retracing his way to London.

The peculiar trait in the character of lord Frederick, which to many seemed but tame submission to the tyrannical will of his father, was a better spirit; it was a deep affection for his parents, which was almost adoration; a reverence for parental authority, which shrank in horror from the slightest act of disobedience, and he felt that he could endure all of earthly woe, rather than incur the penalty of his father's malediction. Doubt not, good reader, his love for Florence! To her his soul was strongly bound, and for her sake he would have braved the fury of the raging tempest. Yes, for her he would have dared the field of death, and rushed to the foremost post of danger! But to resist the will of his parents, to bring upon himself their fierce displeasure, was more than he could bear, even for her so fondly loved. True, when her hand was fondly clasped in his, when gazing on that face of matchless beauty, he had thought that the possession of such a treasure, would compensate for the loss of all beside; he had even ventured to avow his feelings to the earl, but the threatened curse fell like a deadly weight upon his soul, and shook the firmness of his resolve. But when he received the letter of lady Harriet, which revealed to him the baseness to which the earl had resorted, he determined at once to hasten to Cambridge, to prevent the union of Sir James and Florence, and notwithstanding the claims of lady Maria, to wed at once the idol of his heart; but he was aware of the influence of his father, and had requested Lawton to lead the way in interrupting the ceremony, which on their arrival, they learned had already commenced.

The earl endeavored to persuade his son to accompany him to Kent, but lord Frederick could not be prevailed on to do so; he could not bring himself to visit a place where every object would awaken fond remembrances of her, he must now, if possible, forget, and he shrank from meeting lady Harriet, whose comments on his weakness he could not endure, and bidding his beloved Florence and his father an affectionate farewell, he set out on his return to Devonshire, where he resolved to remain, until the return of the Percivals from the continent.

To the request of the earl, that he would still consider Wilmot house his own, Sir James slightly bowed, and led his almost lifeless child to the coach, and as the last ray of the setting sun fell on the landscape, Florence found herself again beneath the roof which sheltered her sunny infancy. Before retiring to their chambers, the baronet informed his daughter of the state of his pecuniary affairs, and intimated to her that it

was his intention to leave, as soon as possible, a place which was no longer his except by sufferance, and added, "You, my dear girl, have now no tie to bind you to your native land; together we will leave it, and in young America we will seek a home! I have yet sufficient to reach its shores, and I trust we shall not find ourselves destitute in the stranger's land! In three days I trust we shall be ready to leave this once dear place; one visit to the graves of our lost ones, and then adieu to the shores of England for ever!"

When Florence found herself alone, she gave vent to the feelings of her anguished heart; but by degrees she became reconciled to the intentions of her father, and her better judgment coincided with his wishes, and she felt that it were better to seek in foreign realms that peace of mind which the land of their nativity could not afford them.

#### CHAPTER XV.

WHEN Florence left her room the following morning, she was informed by the servant that her father was seriously ill. She hastened to his chamber, and found the alarming intelligence confirmed.

"God bless thee, my darling," cried the baronet, as she approached the bed; "much do I fear that we have met but to be separated! I feel the hand of death upon me, and soon thou wilt be indeed an orphan! I have nought to leave thee but my blessing; that I freely give, and oh! may Heaven protect thee, lone, friendless wanderer!"

"Oh! speak not thus, my father, my only friend!" cried Florence, as she clasped her arms convulsively around his neck, and pressed her lips to his burning cheek. "Live still to bless thy wretched child! Have I but found a parent to see him torn from me by death? Oh, 'tis too dreadful! dearest father, live to cheer my aching heart, or see me die with thee! I have drank the cup of misery to its dregs; another draught will end a life of sorrow!"

For three days Florence watched beside the bed of her suffering parent, and then the spirit passed away, and she was indeed an orphan; an orphan in an elevated station, whose pecuniary means were but little above the parish paupers.

The last mournful office for the departed was performed, and the lovely mourner sat alone, overwhelmed with her load of grief. The day was drawing to its close, and the gloom of evening accorded well with the melancholy of her soul. She was aroused by the sound of an approaching carriage, and going to the window, she saw a plain travelling carriage drawn up before the hall door, and her heart beat quick with