

death of our father. During the melancholy period which preceded the funeral, he treated me with kindness, almost amounting to affection; and I was too much overwhelmed with grief to remember my promise to Armyn Redgrave. Joshua's heart was softened towards me, and for the first time in our lives our tears were mingled:

"Oh! let us henceforth live in peace," I sobbed, as my head sunk upon his supporting shoulder, as we stood together by the window, on the evening of my father's funeral. "It was his dying request—remember what the holy David saith—How good and pleasant a thing it is, for brethren to dwell in unity."

"The heart of the stern man melted within him. He did not answer, but pressed me silently to his breast. I felt the sacred hush of holy feeling—it sunk like a healing balm into my wounded heart; and I raised my eyes to heaven in silent prayer. The moon was up, and shone in cloudless beauty upon our little garden. A soft mist was rising on the heath, which, encompassed on every side by lofty woods, in whose gloomy recesses the shades of night appeared to sleep, left the wide plain bright and billowy, like an inland lake surrounded by high rocks. It was a night of calm and delicious beauty—a night, when the silence of nature finds a voice, and her inanimate forms speak in unutterable tones to the overburdened heart. My spirit acknowledged its soothing power, and resigned itself to the Inevitable, when my eyes were arrested in their upward glance, by a dark figure that slowly advanced from the centre of the moonlit plain. I drew a shorter breath, and strove to draw my brother from the spot; but the tightness with which his arms closed round me, convinced me that the same object had attracted his attention! That form, once seen, could not easily be forgotten! My color went and came—a thick mist floated before my sight—though my aching eyeballs were intently fixed upon the tall figure as it rapidly advanced. It was Armyn Redgrave.

"He paused beside the well, and raised his eyes to the open window, at which we were standing. My brother stood back in the shade—my death-pale face alone was visible—my lover's high stern features were distinctly revealed by the clear light of the moon. Oh! how I wished that the clouds would rise and veil her—that the earth would open and swallow me! I endeavored to speak, my brother prevented me.

"Be still, upon your life—I will know who this fellow is, who dares to trespass on my premises, to-night!" These words were muttered between his shut teeth, but every half-formed syllable struck like a dagger to my heart.

"At that moment, Armyn raised his hand and beckoned to me. Forgetting that my brother was present, I made a hasty and impatient gesture for him to be gone. An exclamation of rage burst from Joshua—he flung me from him with a dreadful oath—the action was accompanied by a term of reproach too coarse to be repeated; and snatching down a fowling-piece that was suspended over the mantel-shelf, he rushed from the house; and with a cry of horror and despair, I threw myself upon the ground.

"At length, my brother returned. He struck a light, cast himself into a chair by the table, and commanded me to rise and prepare his supper. I felt inclined to resist his imperative mandate—but when my eye glanced on the chair in which he was seated, and I beheld his reclining attitude, and remembered that it was in that very chair my father died, and the identical position in which I had last seen him, I arose with a heavy sigh, and proceeded to obey his commands. I placed food mechanically before him; but he was too much agitated to eat, and pushed the provisions hastily from him.

"Jane," he said; "do you know that man?"

"I have seen him twice before."

"Only twice?"

"Only twice."

"And where did you first meet him?"

"By the well! the night before my father died. The night," I continued, speaking with passionate earnestness, "when your unkind treatment had driven me to despair, and I left this house with the determination never to enter it again."

"He started from his seat, and paced the room with great rapidity; then stopping abruptly before me, he said:

"Did the sight of that man hinder you from carrying your *virtuous* design into execution?"

"No! but shame to you, Joshua!—it was the few words of sympathy and kindness addressed to me by a stranger, that prevented me from perpetrating a deed, which, if you had any feeling, would have robbed your mind of peace forever."

"Pshaw!" he replied, "I know how to interpret such foolish threats. But you were a weak, credulous girl, to repose confidence in a person you knew nothing about. Were you so rash as to give him any encouragement?"

"The color burnt like fire upon my cheek—rage and indignation filled my breast.

"I will not answer these insulting questions. You have no right to treat me thus."

"Your father, who knew well your perverse nature, has given me a right. He has left me your guardian, and I will soon convince you, that