

in every caprice. She was devotedly attached to Lord Avon, whose slightest wishes had ever been law to her. She viewed him as superior to all she had ever seen, while she pitied him for the secret sorrow that lay so heavy at his heart. At the moment we introduce her to the notice of our readers, she was upbraiding him half seriously for some fault he had committed, for thus she expressed herself:

"Now tell me honestly, Avon, how came you to deceive me in this matter—for I fear it may bring trouble on us both?"

"Deceive you, Fanny, in what way?" inquired Lord Avon, looking up in affected surprise.

"Nay, do not deny it; when you first mentioned Miss Milman to me, and said how earnestly you desired I would seek her acquaintance, did you not tell me it was in commiseration for her lonely state, and from respect to the memory of her father, who had been so kind to you?"

"I did so—and what then?"

"And when I rallied you upon the interest you seemed to take in the young orphan, did you not laugh and say: 'Oh, you need not alarm yourself; she is a quiet little pale demure girl, in a Quaker's bonnet—I cannot even tell you the colour of her eyes.' Now was this fair of you, Avon?"

"Was it untruth?" he inquired archly.

"Yes, yes, you know it was; I have seen many lovely girls, but I think I never beheld so perfectly beautiful a creature as Emmeline Milman. Oh, my brother, it will be fraught with danger to live for days and weeks under the same roof with her and witness her numerous attractions—remember how you are situated."

"Remind me not of the weight which is dragging me to the earth, when I would wish to soar far above it," replied Lord Avon hastily, a look of pain contracting his features. "Fanny, let me be happy while I may—too quickly will it all fade, and forever."

"And can you reconcile it to yourself to conceal your engagement from Emmeline, when you see that she loves you with all the fervour of her tender nature. Think what misery it will cause her when she learns how hopeless it is—and how bitterly you will reproach yourself—nay, how bitterly she will reproach you for destroying her peace."

Lord Avon was silent a few moments, and then said:

"That is another thorn in my breast, but do not you press it so painfully; I cannot dwell on the future, it is all dark, dark, and dreary, but while Emmeline is near to me the present is light and gladdening,—why should I turn into the shade?"

"And would you, to bask in the smiles of this sweet innocent, destroy her happiness? Avon, Avon, let me not blush for my brother. Emmeline must

not be deceived. She shall know that you are affianced to Lady Barbara, that ——"

"Not for your life reveal it; it must come from myself, and no other, Fanny," he continued, striking his forehead; "there are some moments so agonizing that if it were not for the religion her father taught me, I would close my sufferings at once with my life—but I dare not."

Lady Frances shuddered at his words, and the wild expression of countenance which accompanied them, yet she had the courage to reply:

"And your requital, for such blessed knowledge, has been to steal the affections of his child, while honour binds you to another,—shame, shame!"

"For God's sake spare me, and do not heap such cruel reproaches upon me," rejoined Lord Avon, much agitated. "I had always indulged a hope that my destiny might have been changed,—that my father would not enforce the fulfilment of the agreement made between him and Lord Traverscourt, while we were yet children, until lately, when I learned that a fortune is depending on my marriage with his daughter. Am I then so much to blame as you would have me appear? Again, the fetters are not yet forged; I am still free to love Emmeline, without insult to her purity. ——"

"But surely you will not draw down the vengeance of our father by."

"My word is given,—fear not," interrupted Lord Avon. "Now say no more on the hateful subject, for it maddens me," and he arose and walked over to the window.

"Ah! well I suppose like all women I must e'en obey," returned Lady Frances, taking up an open volume she had been reading previous to the conversation; "but had I known what now I know, you never should have beguiled me into bringing sweet Emmeline hither."

"Yes, I should," said Lord Avon, looking over his shoulder and smiling.

"You take advantage of my affection, brother," replied Lady Frances, with an answering smile; "yet I forgive you for the sake of the happiness it is to have gained so charming a friend, so engaging a companion—I must forget that I cannot have her always."

"Would that I could as easily forget," said Lord Avon, the melancholy again gathering on his brow. "Fanny, to possess your light and happy disposition I would forfeit my coronet."

"And Lady Barbara?" asked the provoking Lady Frances.

"Hush, some one enters," he hastily returned, and without waiting to see the intruder, he opened the glass door and ran down the steps of the balcony, proceeding with rapid strides towards the stables, to look at a pony he was training for Emmeline's use.