

THE
LITERARY * CARE AND
AND
BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. IX.

MAY, 1851.

NO. 5.

CLARENCE FITZ-CLARENCE.*

PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF AN EGOTIST.

CHAPTER XI.

Open could render the effect produced on Fitz-Clarence by the Marchesa di Colonna's startling disclosure, that she was no other than the forsaken love of his early days, the trusting, and the wronged Blanche Castleton.

Like one suddenly deprived of speech, of a motion, he stood there, gazing stedfastly on the beautiful being before him, whilst memory

busily called up the past, lending familiarity to every feature, accounting for the dream-like reminiscences, the secret and unaccountable sympathies he had felt for the Italian Marchesa. Yes, it was all plain to him now. Those clear and haunting eyes he knew again, even that striking figure, though the stately dignity of womanhood had long since replaced the fragile grace of the girl. Yes, Blanche Castleton was really before him, but he could not speak. A dull, heavy bewilderment was over him, a torpor he could not shake off, whilst his companion, fixing her flashing eyes on his face, continued:

"Yes, Fitz-Clarence, I am Blanche Castleton, though not Blanche Castleton as you left her, as you made her, blighted, broken-hearted, dying. No, my eye has regained the brightness, my cheek the bloom you robbed me of, but your guilt is not the less for that. You may wonderingly ask yourself what sustained me through the ordeal of fiery suffering, you, yourself, had in cold deliberate

cruelty planned and prepared for me. You may ask what supported me through the fearful moments that followed my waking from the utter trance-like prostration of soul and body, in which I had fallen at your feet, at our last terrible parting. Listen, Fitz-Clarence; I will tell you, and in it you will find the secret of the courtesies, the favors, the proud Marchesa di Colonna lavished on an unknown foreigner, the seeming friendship, the outraged Blanche Castleton vouchsafed the destroyer of her young peace. Listen! it was pride, womanly pride. You thought me a weak, romantic girl, a vain fool. So I was, Clarence, when I listened to your false vows, and believed them, but the bitter lesson you had given me, was not without effect. It transformed me at once from a pining school girl, to a resolute woman. It called forth the strength of heart and will, the firmness of purpose that lay dormant in my nature, and when I rose from the couch of mortal suffering to which your falsehood, for months, had chained me, it was with the firm determination to forget you, at once and for ever; an easier task, perhaps, than might have been at first imagined, for my heart had already learned to despise your very name. As strong in mind as I was ailing in frame, I went abroad with my poor, broken-hearted father, who wondered sadly each day what change had come over his little Blanche, what fresh cold or neglect had thrown her back so entirely. He never knew the secret of that change. I brooded over it in silence, resolving though, even in the midst of my misery, to live, to live to cherish him, and mark me, Fitz-Clarence, to punish you, I have done both. Physicians recommended change of air, the mild breezes of

* Continued from page 169—Conclusion.