

he was not usually depressed. His sorrows, though deep, were silent and unobtrusive. If he wept, his tears were shed in the sacred recesses of solitude, and where no earthly eye beheld them. From a sense of duty he made every effort to rouse his latent energies, and hide his aching heart under an assumed cheerfulness and serenity. Although the furrows of grief were visible on his manly brow, it was seldom unadorned by the smile of benignity and goodness.

Neither time, talent, nor expense, had been spared to render Matilda all her fond parent could desire. Her perfection in the most graceful of female accomplishments realized his sanguine wishes. In disposition she was affectionate; in temper mild and amiable. Her features perhaps bore no particular stamp of beauty, yet her countenance beamed with intelligence, purity, truth, and goodness, which would seem to defy the powers of evil, and place her among beings of a superior caste. Her figure was light and airy—

"She was as sportive as the fawn,
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs."

How often has the tear of joy been seen to sparkle in the major's eye as he beheld his little sylph, as he would call Matilda, bounding over the green sod, to meet him upon his return after a temporary absence—her silken ringlets floating in the winds—her cheeks vying with the rose—her countenance resplendent with health, and beaming with delight; for Matilda dearly loved her father—his absence was painful to her—and she hailed his return as a moment of purest joy.

After the death of his wife, Major Delmar no longer felt that military zest and devotion to his profession, which had hitherto gained him so much distinction; and as his services were not at this crisis demanded by his country, he determined to sell his commission, and retire to some salubrious spot in England, where he hoped, in retirement and tranquillity, to repair a constitution which had been somewhat shaken by the fatigues of war, and the transition to various climates; for this brave officer had not only distinguished himself in the Peninsula, but had been at the capture of Martinique, Guadaloupe, and St. Lucie; he had also served in the East Indies, in the Ionian Islands, and in Canada. In the latter climate he had suffered both ague and fever, from which he had scarcely ever perfectly recovered. He had also another, and perhaps a stronger motive for retirement—that of devoting his time to the education of his little Matilda, being not only desirous that she should excel in external accomplishments, but was doubly solicitous that her mind should be formed on the

model of excellence, which he thought he could more securely depend upon under his own immediate eye and guidance than by placing her at school, which he must have done had he continued in his profession.

Years winged away in their happy retreat. Matilda, cheerful as the lark, and blooming in health, knew not a sorrow or a care, unless she chanced to see, which would sometimes happen, a tear rest on the bronzed cheek of her father; for the hopeless, cureless sadness of a heart which droops with regret and disappointment may be disguised, but not always concealed, nor easily banished. Upon such occasions this child of innocence and love would with her white arm encircle his neck, and kissing away the involuntary tears, assure him how dearly she loved him, while the doting parent held her to his bosom, as though he would have folded her into his inmost heart, and hidden her there for ever.

His son Frederick was progressing rapidly in his studies. He left Harrow, and was then removed to Sandhurst, in expectation of soon procuring a commission. His occasional visits to his family were ever a season of rejoicing to them all, for Matilda dearly loved her brother, and the good old major, very naturally, thought his son the finest fellow in the world. He would often say, while gazing upon his children: "I have sipped deeply of the cup of affliction, but God has mercifully sent me these treasures, to comfort and console my declining years." Frederick's departure was ever a day of sorrow, as his arrival had been one of joy. He was always accompanied on part of his route by his father and sister, and when the last shake of the hand was given, and the painful word "farewell" uttered, a copious flood of tears from all the party closed the scene, and their separate journey concluded in silence and depression.

There were a few families in the immediate neighbourhood of Major Delmar's residence whom he visited on terms of intimacy, but one, only one, for whom he had imbibed the strictest friendship. This was Captain Brown, with his two daughters, residing in a delightful little retreat, separated only from Major Delmar's by the latter gentleman's garden, and a small meadow, through which had been formed a gravel walk, terminating in a thickly planted shrubbery, part of the major's property. Here it was that the young ladies delighted to meet, for they had imbibed as kindly a feeling towards each other as existed between their parents. Their evenings were generally passed together.

The major and the gallant captain, who was also a military man and a widower, would sit each ensconced in his easy arm chair, sip his