

the note before you burnt it, you would not have made these harsh remarks upon it. 'Twas but to save his life!"

"Not harsh, my dear—far from it! And sure I am, I should not disapprove of what you said; and if you'll tell me what your note contained, I can all but promise you, I'll write the same myself."

"I see," she said, "I've been to blame. My fears for him have urged me to forget myself. But, oh! dear uncle, save him, if you can! Warn him, as he loves his life, against the road by Wareop. That indeed, was all I said."

"And that is all I'll say," returned her uncle; "but not all I'll do, for, as sure as he's a Netherby, he'll take that very road. I'll therefore send George off, by break of day, with half a dozen trusty men, to guard the life that may be lightly valued by one you hold so dear. Nay, no thanks," he added, as he kissed her forehead, and took her passive hand within his own. A scalding tear which fell upon it, was all the answer she could make to his "Good night, dear Alice!"

The next day had hardly dawned, when horses' hoofs were heard within the precincts of the court-yard wall, and Alice was at her ensement, to contemplate the stalwart forms of those on whom she rested all her hopes of safety for her lover. She saw them as they filed along, and counted their number with a beating heart, as they issued from the iron studded gate. Young Winterton was at their head, and he turned one lingering look behind, in the hope of catching a glimpse of his fair cousin's form. He had entertained, he knew not why, a vague suspicion; that she had something more to do with this his early ride among the Fells, than had been told to him. He therefore thought he might expect, for his alacrity, some slight token of her approbation; and he was not mistaken, for she kissed her lily hand, and smiled upon him, as he raised his cap, and bowed, and rode away.

Young as he was, he knew her feelings better than to entertain a hope that she would ever be his bride, if indeed the thought had ever come into his head. Not but that he loved his little fairy cousin, as he called her, with all the warmth and ardour of his native clime; but yet, and Alice was not offended, though certainly not flattered, when she found it out, he loved his horses better. This, with a woman's quick perception, she discovered, long before, if ever, he found it out himself. In fact, he cared not where her wandering thoughts might rove, provided she would ride with him o'er hill and dale, by mountain scarp, and thread the path, and ford the stream, and canter through the fells with him the live-

long summer day; and then, no wonder if that thoughtless, wayward boy would sometimes think himself in love. For, far advanced in years as now we are, and lone, and grey as are our locks with age, we'd scorn the day when we were young, if we could see a woman ride as woman ought, and yet not love her with the ardour we should feel if we were young again.

We have said that Mr. Winterton was a man of kind and benevolent feelings, malgre his harsh treatment of master Harry Netherby, who certainly had no one but himself to blame for the cold reception he met with at Forest Hall that unfortunate morning, when he first went there with such good and kind intentions. The thought did not occur to him that they could not be appreciated, simply because there had manifestly been no possible means whereby they could be known or ascertained. This, however, was so far from being a source of any consolation to him, that he first essayed to fasten a quarrel upon the mild old gentleman he had seen; and then, when he found out he had a son, and that Alice Musgrave was to be his bride, he became the scapegoat to expiate his wrath upon. Sense and judgment, however, on more mature and cool reflection, came to his relief in time to save him from what his father would have coupled with his son's inheritance,—a bitter and determined hatred of Forest Hall and all its inmates—all at least save one. Hence, as the reader already knows, the kindly feelings he manifested towards the Wintertons on their first visit at Hellbeck Hall.

Changed, however, as were the opinions of each of these parties towards the other; and firmly and unalterably fixed as were Alice Musgrave's affections upon young Netherby, and eligible as such a match might be for the poor dependant orphan of a ruined house, Mr. Winterton, who, with all his sincerity of manner and benevolence of character, was a man of mercantile and calculating habits, thought his niece's poverty was the bar to such a union; or else that all her foolish fondness had originated in their childish intercourse, which very likely he had long forgotten.

And let not the gentle reader here suppose that Alice, in all outward seeming, bestowed her love on one who was not worthy of it; or that because the first overtures had not come from him, that they were ever likely to proceed from her; yet there did exist a mutual feeling of affection, as firm and as enduring as their own existence. Alice knew—she felt in her young heart she knew it—before she heard a word or hint about it from her nurse, that there surely must have been some strange and unaccountable barrier to prevent their union. It never came