

cruelty. It may well be supposed that his punishments were not applied to check vice; they were the mere result of a natural love of witnessing pain, whether that was experienced in the victim of the arm of the law, or that of the private avenger of his own fancied wrongs.

Paxton had seen and admired Lucy Pringle, as he passed from his house to the Council Chamber. He had no sooner felt the power of her charms, than he set to work to devise some mode of obtaining an interview with the young woman. Though a man of unprincipled character, he had no objections to a wife; and such was the effect produced on him by the appearance of this artless girl, that he had serious thoughts of marrying her, provided he ascertained that, upon an interview, her conversation and manners accorded with her appearance, and that he succeeded in gaining her affections. Such, however, was the bad character of the man, that, even when he intended good, nobody would believe that he was bent on anything but evil; and, as he intended, in this instance, first to gain her affections, and then to declare his honourable purpose, he found an obstacle in his own character, which was productive of such effects as a bad reputation generally is found to be. He first resorted to his power of external charming, by decking himself out with his most showy apparel, exhibiting some of those gems which he had purchased when abroad, and filling the air through which he conveyed his precious body, with sweet effluvia of costly perfumes. To these flimsy attributes of wealth and fantastic conceit, he endeavoured as he passed the house of the unconscious widow, to attract the attention of her daughter; but he had yet to learn that a woman might be found out of Paris who could distinguish between external ornaments and internal worth—the things which adorn the human body, and the qualities that sanctify and elevate the human heart—the fabrics of man, and the work of the Almighty. All his efforts only tended to make the innocent girl avert from him her eyes. What he fancied would produce admiration and love, only excited disapprobation. Too amiable to nourish ideas of indignation at what she conceived to be impudence, she contented herself with awarding to a man who could not appreciate

her gentleness, the simple boon of pity. Her imperturbable ease, and apparent unconsciousness of being even an object of his attention, stung him with greater pain than could have been the effect of the strongest expressions of disgust and anger; and so, indeed, it ever is, that he who can bear reproach is seldom proof against the keener weapons of neglect.

Finding every endeavour to attract the attention of the young girl unavailing, Paxton one day, while loitering about the neighbourhood to catch an opportunity of at least feasting his eyes on her person, observed that the house in which the old widow lived was ticketed for sale. A thought struck him, that he might purchase the dwelling, and trust to the connection which would thereby be produced between landlord and tenant for the means of an introduction to the object of his affections, if not of the acquisition of a power over the fortunes of the unprotected inmates which he could turn to an advantageous account. The boldness of the man set at defiance the common difficulties and obstructions that stood in the way of the accomplishment of his objects. Having inquired who the landlord of the dwelling was, he waited upon him, struck an immediate bargain, and purchased the house, with the condition of having a right to the rent for the current half-year, which was about expiring.—The reason why the seller disposed of the dwelling was, that he could not get payment of his rent from the poor widow; and his sympathy for her and Lucy prevented him from turning them out. The motive of the purchaser, again, was in truth the object of the seller. The poorer the tenant, the worse for the one, the better for the other. It is seldom, indeed, that the views of contracting parties are so nicely fitted; yet how different were the aims of the two individuals!

Lucy's kind friend and lover George Bedford, was the first person who heard of the sale of her mother's house; and knowing the character of Paxton, as well as his endeavours to get introduced to his interesting companion, and altogether ignorant of his real intentions, he hurried to her residence to communicate the disagreeable intelligence, with such consoling and cheering observations as his simple heart enabled him to make. When the unwelcome intelligence