

She seemed to be the victim of an unhappy passion. Her taste for literature was inherent, and assiduously did she cultivate her talent. Often have I seen her at the lonely midnight hour, a solitary light burning on the desk of her father's study, while her pen glided rapidly from side to side of the page. Then when nature would become exhausted from over-exertion, her aching head would rest on the desk, and a gush of tears, succeeded by a low, mournful wail, was heard from the adjoining chamber, where her little sister slept. But her lamentation was never one of reproach or even regret for her unhappy deformity. Oh! no, it was sweet and tender, despairing and humble—but ever submissive. Louisa was the name of the little stricken being, who was the idol of both her parents, and she was the only one of the little flock who was exempt from parental severity. From the delicacy of her constitution, she was never permitted to join her sisters in the household avocations. Her usual seat, in the summer months, was in a small arbor which graced the Pastor's little garden; and there would she sit for hours, in a lone chair, while her thin, white fingers were busily engaged plying the needle, or sketching some pretty landscape from fancy or memory.

As she grew up, her deformity became less apparent, and it was evident that her spirits rose in proportion, yet did she never allude to the change.

At the early age of sixteen, Louisa became acquainted with a gentleman of most prepossessing appearance and gentle manner, who formed a strong attachment to her—and pure and disinterested did she deem the love of this deserving being who loved her for herself alone—notwithstanding her misfortune. It was a sore trial for the Pastor and his wife to part from their engaging daughter, and many were the counsels with which they weepingly resigned Louisa to the arms of a stranger. Her fond heart was sadly grieved to part from her beloved parents, particularly her father, who, as I have already said, had never reproved his favorite. As she stepped into the coach which was to convey her to her bridal home, she turned one long, last look towards the window which contained the forms of those she dearly loved, and leaning her head sorrowfully on the shoulder of her husband, sobbed aloud, while the carriage whirled them rapidly away. Sad and forlorn did poor Louisa feel during the days which preceded her arrival at her new home—but her husband was ever attentive to her wishes, and even allowed her to indulge in those emotions so natural to one under her circumstances.

A few months after her marriage, strong symptoms of consumption exhibited themselves, and

before a twelvemonth had elapsed, the physician declared her in a precarious state, and that he could not hold out the slightest hope. This announcement fell like a thunderbolt on the ears of her affectionate husband, but to herself there was nothing startling in it; she was aware that a few short months must see her at rest, and she felt a secret and anxious longing to re-visit her parents, who resided at a considerable distance from her. She at last expressed her wish to her husband, who soon made arrangements for their departure, and in a few days the sorrowing pair left for the Pastor's humble cottage. Maria was standing at the gate of their little dwelling, attentively watching the slow and feeble approach of her sister, whom she could not possibly have recognised, as she breathlessly ascended the avenue which led to the house. Her greeting was therefore respectful, but not affectionate.

"Can I be so much changed, Maria, that you do not know your own Louisa?"

A sob from Maria was the only reply, and the tears literally rained down the faces of the weeping sisters, who stood for a few minutes clasped in each other's arms.

The husband of Louisa was obliged to attend to some business, which called him to a considerable distance, and much against his inclination he was forced to leave his suffering wife, whom he hoped to find improved in health and appearance on his return. The poor pastor was lying on a sick bed, confined by an inflammatory disease, to which he was occasionally subject. In his weak state it was therefore deemed prudent not to apprise him of his daughter's arrival.

Sore was the struggle for the heart-stricken mother to appear cheerful in the presence of her dying child, and also that of her husband, while she would have given worlds to give way to her pent-up feelings and gushing heart, while an infant in arms required her constant attention, her invalid husband, whose impatient and peevish spirit now rendered him almost unbearable, and now the presence of her patient daughter, who had never left her bed from the hour she entered the house. Oh! it would have wrung tears from the most stony heart, to have watched the devotion of that untiring, gentle wife, with what quiet and noiseless steps did she glide from one room to the other of her precious invalids, while the same beaming, benevolent smile, the same resigned look played round the placid lips of the pale and anxious being.

The physician who attended Mason was called in to see Louisa; his first visit was short; he was shewn into a neat and tidy room, where he found a sweet and wasted looking being, stretched on a low bed, at the foot of which sat her almost