

To return. It is not from inexperience merely that great danger arises to young persons from early friendships. The ardor with which they love opens another path to danger. Hence they are willing to make themselves enemies in the cause of a friend, to justify every part of her conduct; and should she act imprudently, their zeal prompts them even to participate in the censure, rather than desert *such a friend*. Now it is one of the best marks of real friendship to detect the faults, weaknesses, or errors of a friend, and with united delicacy and tenderness to point them out. But the ardor of early attachment will not allow any errors.

"Thou hast no faults, or I no faults can spy."

The doting language of the young enthusiast; nay, not unfrequently, the very blemishes are beauties, and will even be copied and adopted. Premature friendships often give a tinge to future relations; and, from their influence in other connexions, as those of business or marriage, may prove seriously injurious. It is true, there are known exceptions; but they seemed peculiar cases, in which the hand of Providence was evident. I recollect an amiable and engaging woman, who to a graceful person united an excellent understanding, sweetened by an almost unexampled temper, and polished and refined by the advantages of education, and intercourse with the most fashionable circles.

"Thus beautiful as sweet,
And young as beautiful, and soft as young,
And gay as soft, and innocent as gay,"

She became unexpectedly and suddenly acquainted with a cousin of hers, whom she had not had the least expectation of seeing; a young woman whose person derived its chief graces from reflecting charms of her mind. Brought up in a recluse way, but well educated, she had formed scarcely any society but that of the best authors. Naturally grave and thoughtful, reserved and modest, shunned observation, and was from her appearance and disposition the least likely of any other to captivate the heart of the named; yet so it was. An intimacy commenced of most happy consequences to the former, as it proved the means of leading her from the gay world to seek eternal salvation. They are now in heaven, rejoicing, I doubt not, that they ever met: and I am happy in being able to bear this testimony of respect to the fine merit of a *sister* and of a *cousin*.