

sire you to know, that I have not yet the honor of being your servant."

"Nor am I your fool, Madam! I have ever yielded to you—perhaps too much. Ill humor I can bear and forgive; besides little quarrels give variety and incident to life. But this foolishness is too intolerable."

"Much obliged to you! Practice proves how much you have yielded. I beg to know who has ever given up most? For long years I have endured your faults in silence, and magnanimously pardoned them, as more the errors of education and the understanding, than of the heart. But the most angelic forbearance and amiability can be too severely tried."

"There you are quite right. Had I not the most forbearing, forgiving disposition in the world, I could not have borne your ill humor and caprice so long. But I must plainly say, that it is too much, to expect me to be the obedient servant of folly. I can bear the yoke no longer."

"I too will plainly say, what I have long thought, that you are a haughty, self-conceited egotist; a heartless man, always talking of 'feeling' and 'love' which you do not possess. Such people always boast of what they have not."

"That is the reason you speak so frequently of your amiable disposition, and fine mind. You may deceive others, perhaps; thank heaven, I was undeceived, long ago! Virtue, with you, is nothing more than a feminine affectation. The more intimately I know you, the more does this disgust me. Indeed, I should not be very miserable, if you should wish to return to your family, and leave me in peace."

"You have anticipated my wishes! A more tedious, conceited egotist was surely never created to amuse a sensible woman; and after a man becomes ridiculous in the eyes of his wife, you must know there can be no greater happiness, than for her to be speedily rid of him."

"Extremely amiable, truly! All is then unmasked. I take you at your word. Adieu! Truly, it seems like some pleasing dream; in the morning the matter shall be duly arranged."

"The earlier, the better, my Lord Count!"

And so they parted. The next morning, a notary was sent for; witnesses came; the act of divorce was written and signed by both; and notwithstanding the entreaties and remonstrances of friends and relatives, the separation took place.

Thus was a long and apparently happy union suddenly broken. A ridiculous dispute about the future destinies of three sons, who were yet by no means in the world, had broken a tie which should have been for eternity. And yet both the count and countess belonged to the better class of mankind, and had no faults worse than the frailties to which all are subject.

"Did you call the story amusing?" asked Louise, sorrowfully; "it has made me very sad. I can easily comprehend how unhappiness and disagreement can affect excellent people; but as you have made me fearful and anxious, can you not encourage and comfort me? What a fate to lose my husband's love!"

"What do you mean?" asked her aunt.

"Ah! my dear aunt; could I always remain young, I might then be certain of my husband's constancy."

"You are still in error, my beloved child; for even if you should remain beautiful, and blooming, as you are to-day, your husband's eyes would become so accustomed to your loveliness, as to view it with indifference. And yet familiarity is the greatest enchantress in the world, and one of the most beneficent fairies in our home. She knows no difference between the beautiful and the ugly. The husband grows old; familiarity prevents the wife from perceiving the change. On the contrary, should the wife remain young and beautiful, and the husband become old, the consequences might be unhappy; for the old are sometimes jealous and exacting. It is better as it has been ordered, in wisdom and love, by the Almighty Father. If you should become a withered old woman, and your husband remain a blooming youth, how could you expect to retain his heart?"

"Alas! I know not!" sighed Louise.

"I will tell you," continued her aunt, two things, which I have fully proved. The first will go far toward preventing the possibility of any discord; the second is the best and surest preservative of feminine charms."

"Tell me!" said Louise, anxiously.

"The first is this: demand of your bridegroom, as soon as the marriage ceremony is over, a solemn vow, and promise also yourself, never, even in jest, to dispute, or express any disagreement; I tell you, never!—for what begins in mere bantering, will lead to serious earnest. Avoid expressing any irritation at one another's words. Mutual forbearance is one great secret of domestic happiness. If you have erred, confess it freely, even if confession cost you some tears. Further, promise faithfully and solemnly, never, upon any pretext or excuse, to have any secrets or concealments from each other; but to keep your private affairs from father, mother, brother, sister, relations, and the world. Let them be known only to each other, and to your God. Remember that any third person admitted into your confidence, becomes a party to stand between you. They will naturally side with one or the other. Promise to avoid this, and

renew the vow upon every temptation. It will preserve that perfect confidence, that union, which shall indeed make you as one. Oh, if the newly married would but practice this simple duty, this secret spring of connubial peace, how many unions would be happy, that are now miserable!"

Louise kissed, fervently, the hand of her aunt, and said: "I see it all. Where there is not this implicit confidence, the pair remain, even after their marriage, as strangers. They cannot understand each other; and without mutual confidence, there can be no real happiness. And now, dear aunt, what is the best means of preserving female beauty?"

Her aunt smilingly answered: "We cannot conceal from ourselves that we love and admire what is beautiful, more than what is not; but what peculiarly pleases, what we really call beautiful, is not hair or complexion, form or color. These may please in a picture or a statue; but in life, it is the mind, the soul, which displays itself in every look and word, and charms alike in joy or sorrow. This, too, is expected from, and alone renders worthy of love, a beautiful exterior. We find a vicious man hateful and disgusting, even if polished and elegant in manners and appearance. A young female, who would retain the love and admiration of her husband, after the charms of person which had attracted him have vanished, must keep bright, and in constant play, the graces of the mind, the virtues of the soul. Wisdom and prudence do not always increase with years, while faults and passions generally do. Virtue, however, cannot change. It is the same throughout eternity; unalterable, like its divine author. If, therefore, you would preserve your union inviolate and happy, upon earth, and be reunited to the beloved one in heaven, 'keep your heart with all diligence;' so shall you retain that spiritual beauty, that more perfect loveliness, which your husband will love and admire, long after the cheek has faded, and the form lost its symmetry. I am not a hypocritical devotee, nor an old woman, dead to all the pleasures and enjoyments of life. I am but seven-and-twenty. I enter with avidity into the pleasures and feelings of the world; but I say to you, there is no other security for enduring happiness."

Louise threw her arms round the neck of her aunt, and kissed her tenderly.

M. L. P.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER.

I do not love to speak to many of my poor friend and early playmate, the rector's daughter. There is a sacredness about her sorrow—it has something so almost mysterious in its dispensations—and is borne with a fortitude so touching, and a resignation so saintlike—that it seems ever to me unfitted for ordinary handling, and language an inappropriate exponent of her mournful tale. A grief like Caroline's should have no other interpreter than the sad and solemn characters which it has written on her still beautiful brow. She never weeps—at least none see her weep; and her gentle voice, which from her very childhood had a tone of sadness, is heard by no mortal ears in the language of complaint. What dirge-like music may be uttered in the haunted depths of that wounded spirit is known only to herself and the angels; but to the world, she speaks always calmly—and even cheerfully at times. You who knew Caroline through all her young days, will remember well that, light-hearted as the sweet child was, there was even then at times a sort of shadow on her brow—an air of thought not natural and infinitely touching, in one so young. As she grew towards womanhood, the shadow became permanent without deepening; and the graceful girl, with her long fair hair and somewhat antique fashion of dress, gave us both the impression of one predestined to suffer—

"She was of those whose very morn
Gives some dark hint of night,
And in her eye, too soon, was born
A sad and softened light;
And on her brow youth set the seal
Which years upon her brain,
Confirmed too well—and they who feel
May scarcely weep again!"

Seated, amid the shadows of a summer evening, in the old oratory which her father had fitted up as a boudoir, for her who was all the treasure that time had left him—ministered to by the breath of the jasmine and the fragrance of the rose—I have gazed at times, on the unconscious girl, when, to my excited imagination, there was something almost apocalyptic in her look; till, as I stepped in upon her, the spirit of prophecy seemed lifted from the forehead, before a smile of welcome that made her face like the face of an archangel. Oh! those happy days in the old rectory!—for Caroline was happy then; and the seeming cloud on her brow (for it had not yet reached her heart) was but the shadow flung from that approaching destiny which has, since, alighted. I cannot, therefore, speak of the rector's daughter to every one: but to you, who knew and loved her as I did myself, I will, at length, fulfil the promise so often made, and narrate the incident which finally darkened her spirit for all the remainder of its earthly pilgrimage.

The early pleasures and early trials of the rector's daughter are as well known to yourself as to me; and you remember well how

rich a volume the sibyl Hope presented to Caroline, when she first emerged from childhood. Year after year tore away some portion of that charmed book; and the perished leaves but enhanced the value of her young heart to those that remained. You remember well how, each after the other, her sisters were laid beneath the old trees in the churchyard; and the channels in which her young affections had been accustomed to run, were, one by one, thrown back into the deep well of her spirit, there to seek fresh outlets, or make the heart a waste. Then, her mother, weary with her long separation from those who were to return no more, went forth to them, and was laid in a grave by their side. From that day, Caroline was a child no more—at least she never again looked like one: and her father, the kind-hearted rector, old in heart, though in the vigour of his years, had none but herself to remind him of all that he had lost, and inherit the accumulated treasure of love which had reverted to his spirit from the cluster of groves in the neighbouring church-yard. And then came happier times to Caroline; and her heart found fresh issues. You remember George P***—the play-days of the young cousins—their joint studies—their young attachment—their mature love. You were a witness to the growth of that hallowed and hallowing love, amid the fond and smiling approval of all who had an interest in the youthful pair. Those were Caroline's sunny days!—when the memory of her childish griefs had taken a tone in which indulgence had a charm for her heart, and she seemed, in the bright prospect which was opening up around her to have emerged from the destiny that had overhung her like a prophecy! Something, however, of her latter sorrows I believe you know; for you had not gone forth from amongst us when her new and final trials began. You remember George's departure for Oxford, and the rumors that reached our quiet village, and the hearts that loved him there, of the surrender to the temptations by which he was surrounded. You saw the gradual coming up of that cloud, from the day when it was "no bigger than a man's hand," till it had overspread the entire heaven of that hope in which the rector and his daughter had been blest, and shut out the sunshine from poor Caroline's heart. You know that, when George left Oxford, and flung himself into the vortex of London dissipation, instead of returning to the fond and forgiving hearts that awaited him at the rectory, his reckless career of extravagance had involved the fortunes and bowed down the spirit of his father. But the sequel of that painful story, you know not—and that I am now to relate to you.

It was in the old rectory, Caroline's boudoir, amid the deepening shadows of an autumn eve, that the rector and his daughter spoke together, for the last time, of George P***. The old man had marked the sufferings of his child, in her pale and wasted cheek; and, in his earnest desire for her happiness, and with something like a hope that the nobler qualities of her lover might yet come out clear from the shadow by which they were, for the moment, darkened, had forborne to add to her distress, by any comments on the conduct of him to whom she was betrothed. But the profligate student had forgotten the hearts that yearned towards him, amid all his follies; and tidings of his excesses had reached the village, which robbed the rector of his last hope, and made it incumbent on him to dissolve the ill-omened connexion, for the sake of his daughter's peace. In that solemn interview, he exacted a promise from Caroline—given with many tears, but unhesitatingly given—that she would consider the engagement between herself and her cousin as cancelled: and as he kissed her cheek, and bid adieu to her for the night, the poor girl felt that, but for her father, she was, once more, alone in the world. Never had she felt so desolate till that hour; but the morning was to bring a yet deeper desolation to her breast. That night took from her the last heart to which her's clung: for, amid its shadows, the rector had passed away—almost direct, as it seemed, from that painful interview with his sole surviving child—to the presence of those to whom he had mourned so deeply and so long!

Months passed over the head of the bereaved girl, cheered by no incident save the universal sympathy which her orphan condition and unvarying sweetness won for her. The new rector, whose family was large, had been supplied with a more commodious residence than the old rectory house; and by the kindness of the patron, an arrangement had been made, which left her, with her nurse, in possession of the home which had been the scene of all her hopes, and was now for her "the house of memory." Tidings had indeed been received of her former lover, which, no doubt, brought consolation with them—though after the pledge given to her father within the immediate shadow of his grave, they could no longer bring hope. His naturally noble mind had awakened from its demoralizing dream; and the energies of a "spirit finally turned," had directed themselves, at length, to those "fine issues" which were its natural result. His soul had shaken off the foul mists by which its clearer perceptions had been, for a time, so fatally obscured; and, amid the sweet and sacred images that came gliding back into his purified heart, came first and sweetest of them all, the vision of the rector's daughter. Then it was, that he loathed the vow which had come between their hearts, and knew that he and Caroline were separated by the solemn shadows of the rector's grave. In the strength of his redeemed and penitent spirit, he bowed his head to the dispensa-