

LOVE AND PRIDE.

"Why did she love him?—Curious fool, be still!
Is human love the growth of human will?"

"It is very strange," said Caroline St. Clair, starting suddenly from her seat, and pacing her room with hurried steps; "It is very strange I cannot learn to love Lord Frederick Fitzmaurice; the perfection of everything we could wish for, as everybody says; handsome, rich, talented, amiable!—and it is equally strange, and alas! not less true, that I cannot *help* loving Charles Moray, whom nobody seems to think has anything particular to recommend him. It is true his strange manner is rather against him; but then, though he seems cold, and almost indifferent to other people, he is never so to me; and this, in my vain eyes, is just an additional reason for liking him.

"The sun shines bright when all's awake,
On earth and o'er the deep;
I like the moon which shines on me
When all the world's asleep!"

"Still, though they are much too indulgent to press it, I know my father and mother wish me to marry Lord Frederick, and that consideration ought to outweigh my wayward predilection for Charles. I also know that could my proud father see his darling daughter's heart laid bare before him—did he but suspect the passion she is cherishing there—it would bring his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave: and this consideration *ought*—not only to make me hate that passion, but feel indifferent to its object: and yet," she continued, and she shook her head mournfully as she spoke, "I cannot subdue it; it has gained a place in my very soul, too strong, my conscience tells me, for any human affection to hold there, and I must submit to its control. Still my family need not fear"—and unconsciously she walked more proudly through the room.—"If Caroline St. Clair cannot make the only sufferer herself; if she cannot make her father and mother happy by marrying Lord Frederick, the object of their choice, she will not make them miserable by uniting herself to any one against their inclinations. No, no! mine alone be the misery, the proper penalty of encouraging a love which my reason tells me to be wrong. But," she continued, after a pause,

"my unhappiness will not be the only fruit of that encouragement; at least, if Charles loves me as I love him, he will be miserable too, when he finds that our love is hopeless, and can only be indulged in at the expense of my father's curse; and to be the cause of misery to Charles is more than I could bear. Oh!" she passionately exclaimed, throwing herself on a sofa, and burying her face in her hands; "better marry Lord Frederick than this! It may be still time to save Charles; he has never said he loves me,—perhaps he does not; and were I another's, his better principle would soon enable him to get over any little predilection he may now feel for me. Though I cannot *love* Lord Frederick, I could at least be a good wife. I think I know what constitutes that. I would endure everything, try everything, in sickness I would watch over him, in sorrow sympathise with him, and were he joyous, I would *try* to smile with him: but then, and she shuddered as the idea came over her,—"*should a thought of Charles steal across me, how I should hate myself! Oh! how could I, with my affections fixed on another, look into my husband's face, and smile? No, no, no, that were impossible!* And yet what to do? the post hour approaches, and my father says I must write definitively to Lord Frederick to-day. Oh! for one friend in the wide world whose opinion I *might* ask, whose advice I could follow! But," she exclaimed, as a sudden idea seemed to strike her, "I have such a friend; one whose advice I have often asked and always followed—and that friend is Charles. Yes, I am resolved what to do; I know he is in the library just now; I will go to him, tell him of Lord Frederick's unfortunate fancy for me, my family's more unfortunate wishes on the subject, and ask him what I am to do. I shall discover whether he loves me or not—if he does, no power on earth shall induce me to accept Lord Frederick—if he does not, for my father and mother's sake, I will sacrifice myself, and marry him."

So reasoned Caroline, the only child of Sir John and Lady St. Clair, and having arrived at this extraordinary conclusion, to the library she forthwith proceeded.—She found Charles Moray