

moon, were spent by them in laying down plans for the moral and religious conduct of their future lives.

At the expiration of the appointed time, the expected pair returned; the bride and her bridal dresses to be the wonder and the admiration of her native place; the husband, to feel himself the master of a well appointed establishment, and one of the happiest men in the world. Nor was there, according to the common ideas and calculations of society, any thing to make him otherwise.—He had an extensive and increasing practice; more than an average share of talent, energy, and skill; the good will of numerous friends, and the good fellowship of more; and a wife, a cook, and a table, with which the world could find no fault. What could any reasonable man desire beyond?

Frederick Bond had made these calculations a hundred times before; but when he now returned from visiting his patients, and felt himself thoroughly established in his own home, he sunk upon a downy couch, more than ever convinced that he was, beyond all dispute, the happiest of men.

Sunday came, and with their first appearance in public, Mr. and Mrs. Bond enjoyed the opportunity of putting in practice some of their studiously concocted plans for being *KATHA* religious. They went at precisely the right time to church—neither early nor late; and a boy in handsome livery walked after them with the books. They dined early; and in the afternoon remained at home alone, in order that their servants might go to church; and altogether spent the day so much to their own satisfaction, that they began to wonder how any one could find it either difficult or disagreeable to be religious.

It is sufficient to say of the formal visiting—that tax upon married life—that it was all conducted in the best possible order, and that no breach of good taste could be detected by the most scrutinizing eye, either in the dress of the parties, or the appointment of the new establishment.

Amongst the numerous visitors on this occasion, those who offered their congratulations in the warmest terms, were Sir James and Lady Mornford. It would be difficult to say exactly, by what means these two individuals had obtained their station of pre-eminence in the town of ——. But so it was, that no dinner party was complete without Sir James, and no evening entertainment was considered worth dressing for, without his Lady.

The gentleman was one of the old English school—one who sat long over his wine, and could rise from table at midnight, apparently as little disordered, as if he had been drinking pure water. He possessed great knowledge of the world, it by this expression we understand a knowledge of rank, title, and precedence, of dress and equipage, of inns, and horses, of field sports, and martial law, and the etiquette of public affairs. Without a rival in knowledge of this description, Sir James Mornford was regarded as a man to be looked up to; while his dignified and gentlemanly manners, accompanied by a fund of spontaneous sarcasm and grave humour, rendered him almost as much feared as he was admired, especially by those who were only novitiates in his peculiar kind of knowledge of the world.

Frederick Bond, along with many of his friends, was often astonished to find himself betrayed into positive servility towards Sir James; and although he stood more erect after detecting himself in this folly, and determined it should be the last of the kind he ever would commit; no sooner had the baronet bestowed upon him some mark of individual favour, than he again fell in with his humour, laughed at his jokes, and courted his attention with as much assiduity as ever.

That Eleanor should have been equally flattered by the friendship of Lady Mornford, was indeed no wonder; for she was one of the most fascinating and amiable of women, if by amiable, we understand a prevailing disposition to think kindly of others, with a desire to be loved, at least as much as she was capable of loving. Had Lady Mornford been told that this capability did not extend beyond the usual limits, of human affection, she would have resented the information as at once injurious and insulting, for she believed herself to be *all heart*; but in her little sphere of philosophy, she had not perceived the difference between impulse and feeling. She was, however, so beautiful, so bewitching in her manners and appearance, that few could withstand her fascinations. She was neither highly talented, nor highly accomplished. The secret of her influence seemed to be a sort of intuitive knowledge of the restrictions and requirements of good breeding; so that while others were studying every means, and watching every opportunity to acquit themselves with propriety, she could allow herself the license of her own impetuous nature, without once

transgressing those mysterious laws, about which the middle or lower grades of society are often so painfully solicitous.

Eleanor Bond could never discover how it was, that her drawing-room, with all the pains she bestowed upon it, looked so decidedly inferior to Lady Mornford's; and with regard to dress, her own resembled too much the well-assorted flowers in a garden; while those of Lady Mornford, composed as it was of colours which few people would have ventured upon, was more in keeping with the graceful luxuriance of nature. Her laugh too, was so wild and unseal, yet so unquestionably genuine, that she could spread the infection of merriment wherever she went; while her prompt and impetuous answers, her arch smile and playful drollery, seldom failed to win back again the friends whom her careless caillery might otherwise have driven effectually away.

Whatever faults Sir James and his lady might possess, they had one redeeming quality—for they were tenderly and devotedly attached to each other. There existed between them an affection which caprice had not been able to alienate; which time, for they were neither of them young, had not wasted away; and which, in the midst of false excitement, and falsehood of almost every kind, had remained to them as the only thing real with which they were acquainted. Such were the friends whom Frederick Bond and his amiable bride determined to make their own, and in this object they succeeded beyond their most sanguine hopes.

Persons addicted to favouritism have usually a favourite medical attendant. Lady Mornford made a point of either loving or hating every body; though her hatred was so entirely a matter of profession, that it seldom extended to thinking or speaking evil of any one. Mr. West, the partner of Frederick Bond, was an exception to her rule of extremes; for he was a man whom it was impossible to dislike; though his cold and formal manners had too much the effect of repulsion, for Lady Mornford not to express, in the warmest terms, her preference for the junior partner.

Mrs. West, too, was no favourite either with Lady Mornford or with Eleanor. Her ladyship used to say, there was a tacit reproach in the prudent silence of this gentle and simple-hearted woman, which she never could bear; while Eleanor felt, a little too sensibly, the contrast, between the habits of Mrs. West and her own.

"There can be no occasion for Mrs. West to dress so plainly," she would often say, "it looks like affectation. Good people ought never to be singular."

"But she gives a great deal to the poor," observed an acquaintance, one day as they were conversing on this subject; and she enumerated many acts of charity, with which the world in general was unacquainted.

"She must indeed," said Eleanor, "be very generous." And her conscience smote her with the conviction of her own deficiencies; for the scale on which she had commenced her house-keeping, left little for charitable purposes. "Mrs. West must be very generous. But there is a prudent, and an imprudent charity; and there is a style of giving that is out of all keeping—beyond all proportion—"

"Beyond all proportion with what?" inquired her friend, "with your charities, or mine?" And she laughed so heartily at the happiness of her own observations, that Eleanor felt more annoyed than ever by the unquestionable merits of Mrs. West.

This friend, if friend she might be called, was one of those who established intimacies without affection. She had, consequently, outlived so many, that when she first made advances of a social nature to the newly married couple, they determined not to be drawn into the snare. Miss Masterman possessed, however, the strong recommendation of being excellent in an evening party, for she could flirt with the gentlemen, laugh at the ladies, and render herself entertaining to all. Alone, with one person, she was too harsh, or too laboriously brilliant to produce any pleasing effect; but as some of those gorgeous flowers, which, when gathered, are glaring and painful to the eye, may yet adorn the parterre, she found a place in society, and was thought to mingle well with the softer or more temperate varieties of human character.

Such, then, were the associates whom Eleanor drew around her.—Lady Mornford, because she was the fashion; Miss Masterman because she made her drawing-room more attractive.

And now the formal visiting had all been gone through, when Frederick Bond proposed, all things being settled, to have a gentleman's dinner-party—only a few friends—just the choice set with whom he had been accustomed to dine in his bachelor days, and who now indulged themselves in many a sarcasm at his expense, because he had lately refused to join them in the accustomed manner. For some weeks, nay months, he found himself