

he could wear a smile—he could talk gaily, and even dance.”

“Amy, my precious child, you astonish me,” replied Mrs. Somerville, “and I think you have allowed fancy to distress you unnecessarily. Men are not as we are—they sedulously guard against any display of their tenderest feelings; in a party of strangers, what could you expect?”

“Had he only called me Amy—had I met but one kind smile—but no, he has forgotten me—and I deserve it, bitterly deserve it. Mamma, when you lately warned me that the hopes centered alone in earthly things carried pain and disappointment in their stream, I thought you might be mistaken, and that I knew of one, which could turn all into enchantment around me; that hope has been my dream night and day. Mamma, I have closed my bible to think of him; now, tell me if the humbling punishment I have experienced is not just. When I recall the heartfelt peace, the happiness I used to derive from the study of that blessed book, and compare it with the wandering state of my mind for some time past, I am overwhelmed by sorrow for my base ingratitude to my Saviour; but never, never again shall it be so—I will cast forth every remembrance I have cherished, as I now do that worthless ornament which has been pressing on my brow until it aches to agony;” and as she spoke, she unclasped the band of pearls which had encircled her head, and threw it on the ground.

Mrs. Somerville’s fullest sympathy as a woman was called forth. She felt that reasoning, in such a moment, would be ill-timed, and she allowed her to indulge her feelings until they gradually subsided into a calmer state; she then said to her:

“Amy, I will not dare tell you that you have not been to blame, nay, seriously so—let me rather return thanks to God that you are awakened to a sense of the extreme sinfulness of suffering any object to steal your heart from its best treasures; at the same time, I will strive to comfort you by suggesting the idea, that the Earl’s estranged manner must have arisen from some unknown cause, which, when explained, will satisfy you both; for had you beheld his distressed countenance when he opened the door to permit your retreat, you would have thought him any thing but indifferent. Calm yourself in prayer, my child—repose your grief and your anxieties on one who never turns away—who, having felt our infirmities, and sustained the burden of our sins, (though sinless himself,) is ever ready to forgive the truly contrite and repentant heart. Yes, my child, think of that dear Saviour, and compare His love with the wayward, capricious love of man; remember all his sufferings for you, until your chastened spirit acknowledges that whatever usurps an undue influence over you, and interferes with your higher duties to God, must produce results the most baleful, and fraught with pain.”

Amy’s tears still continued to flow, but not in the same violence. Mrs. Somerville had succeeded in raising her, and placing her gently in the chair, with her beautiful head resting on the bosom of this valued guide of her youth, whose mild reasoning soothed, while it rekindled hope. Her hands were clasped, and she seemed mentally imploring for that grace and strength which only could bring back those peaceful feelings and holy thoughts upon which her truest happiness was based.

An hour thus passed, when Ursula and Annetta were summoned to assist her, ere she retired for the night. The rich pale pink satin dress, which had been selected with so much care by Mrs. Somerville, was now thrown carelessly aside, and a loose muslin robe substituted, while Annetta unbraided the luxuriant tresses, which fell, like a long black pall, over her pale, lovely features. There was something, at that moment, so unearthly in her appearance, that Mrs. Somerville heavily sighed; as she gazed upon her, her thoughts reverted to her angelic mother:

“Alas,” she said mentally, “while I preach to her, have not I been making an idol?”

Annetta saw there was something wrong, and, for a time, she continued her task in silence; but, unable to withstand the temptation to talk, she at length said:

“I cannot conceive what is the matter with every one tonight—they either appear cross, or sad, or sorry. Mr. Lewis, Sir Charles Courtenay’s servant, came into Mrs. Clement’s, the housekeeper’s room, saying that his master was in such a passion before dinner, because he was cold, and his face blue with the frost; he covered it over with pomade, which he was forgetting to remove, when Mr. Lewis, in the most polite manner, approached him with a napkin, just as he had reached the head of the staircase, in his impatience and hurry, he slid down the whole flight, meeting the Countess on his return. Mr. Lewis made us all laugh most heartily, while imitating his master’s low bows, with his polished face, as the Countess smilingly passed him. And then again, to see Gasper taking off Miss Courtenay waltzing with Lord Eltonville; he was handing round coffee at the time, and, though he looks so quiet, nothing escapes him—he put himself into attitude, dancing up to Mrs. Clements, who is one of the most prim old maids in the world, looking in her face so beseechingly, while she frowned, and drew herself up, her very cap appearing to stand more erect, in anger at the insult to her dignity; when, unfortunately, in pointing out his toe, it came in contact with one of her favourite china dishes, filled with jelly, which fell down, and broke in pieces. Poor Gasper was obliged to make good his retreat, to escape the good lady’s fury, tumbling over Vernon, who at that moment was entering with a tray full of glass, and who has been as testy and cross since dinner as possible. ‘When will you