

than seeing our lame hermit paying his devotions to the blind pagan deity, falsely named a God. It would be such charity, you know, to smile upon the *halt* as well as the *deaf*. Poor fellows! They both labor under such physical disadvantages. The one could not run after you, the other cannot speak his love. But you are such a dear little compassionate soul, you would be sure to have pity for both. As for me, I deny the power of love. A sensible woman should never own to such weakness. I never saw the man yet, I should like to see in his night cap."

Rose could not help smiling at this sally, though she did not think it exactly right to laugh at the personal defects of others.

"Who is Arthur Walbrook?"

"Oh! I must not anticipate. You will see the gentleman at dinner. He is my aunt's ghostly confessor, and my particular enemy. So, my dear Rose, if you profess any friendship for me, you must not fall in love with Arthur Walbrook. I hear my aunt's bell ring, so, adieu for the present."

Away walked the beautiful dependent, with the step and gait of an arch-duchess; and once alone, Rose drew from her bosom Edgar's forgotten letter.

"When your eyes fall upon these lines, Rosamond, traced by an uncertain and faltering hand, you will be far from the pleasant bowers of Bramby—far from one, to whom you are as dear as the glorious frame of nature, that magnificent embodiment of the love and power of God. Yes! my hand falters, but my heart is firm. I have wrestled all night with the giant passion that consumes me, and the idol self lies bleeding and vanquished, at the shrine of duty. When Providence set me apart, and made me to differ from others, she never intended me to make my infirmities a burthen to my fellow-creatures. I feel this keenly. I know that I labor under insurmountable disadvantages, that it would be cruel to excite your pity, to urge you to share your bright destiny with one whose condition is hopeless and humiliating. Beloved friend! sister of my soul! I will speak of love no more. I will try and banish from memory the fatal truth, to bury the arrow that rankles in my breast, in the silent depths of my heart, for ever. To convince you that I am sincere—that I ask and hope for no sacrifice on your part—that I would no longer listen to such concessions if you were willing to make them—I leave Oak Hall to-morrow for Italy, and mean to travel in company with my old tutor, for some years. Adieu! May good angels watch over you, and keep you as pure and unspotted from the world, as you are at

this moment. If in this world we should ever meet again, it will be as friends—tried and true; but lovers, no more! Yours, in the sincerity of truth,

EDGAR.

CHAPTER VI.

I do mistrust you—fear the searching glance
Of that dark piercing eye. The fitful smile
That curls that proud lip ne'er was born of mirth,
But speaks the very bitterness of scorn.

ROSAMOND read and re-read this letter, and if tears fell fast upon the page, it was more in admiration for the noble character of the writer, than from regret that she was no longer to look upon him as her lover. He had denied himself, denied her, had done that which reason and duty dictated, and she felt he had sacrificed the hopes dearest to him upon earth to secure her happiness, and she pressed the letter fervently to her lips, and inwardly prayed God to bless and reward the writer. She was yet in this attitude when Miss Morton entered.

"How! not dressed for dinner—and in tears. Cousin Rosamond! Your grandmother is impatient to see you. Come, I must see the charming epistle that has clouded those blue eyes with such an unfashionable moisture," and she twitched Edgar's letter from Rosamond's resisting hand. "Humph—sentimental and sensible at the same time. I hope you duly appreciate the sublime resignation of the writer. Well, he is right. What business has a man to burthen a lovely girl with his infirmities. If you had been the poor country girl now, it would have been kind and generous to have offered you a share of his splendid home and fortune, in compensation for the dullness of being help-mate and mouth-piece to a deaf and dumb gentleman. But to make love to a beautiful heiress! Faugh! the thing is selfish in the extreme. I am glad he is sensible of the folly, and hope that you will be reasonable enough to thank him for his discernment."

"You are too severe, Cousin Marianne, but I forgive you. You never loved,"—and taking the arm of her tall cousin, Rosamond descended the stairs and found herself in the dining-room.

Her grandmother was already at the head of the table, while the place at the foot was occupied by a middle-aged man of short stature, and slight, spare figure, who rose to meet the ladies, and conducted Rosamond to her seat, at the right hand of Mrs. Sternfield, who introduced her young relative to her nephew, Mr. Walbrook.

During the removes, Mrs. Sternfield asked