

islander—jovial, social, with some reading, and considerable knowledge of the world; and the son, a copy of his senior, though scarcely a correct one. But Miss Elinor proved more companionable than either of them. His communication with her sex had been limited, and confined principally to those of his own retired neighbourhood, and consequently her superior education and acquaintance with society, were not without effect. She perceived her advantage, and followed it up with practised generalship. She seemed to discover intuitively the subjects in which he most delighted, and if they were not already within the range of her acquirements, she possessed the greatest solicitude for information upon them. She submitted to his taste and judgment with the most engaging deference. She contrived occasions for daily intercourse, in which suspicion, herself could not have detected design, and, in short, she performed her part so well, that our village gossips, judging from outward indications, were unanimously convinced that the fates had grown tired of the old thread, and commenced a new one in our bachelor's favor.

"Have you heard the news?" was echoed at church, at market, and at tea-table; "Doctor Witherton is caught at last."

But was he really caught? It was a question that would have puzzled the doctor himself. He was certainly not in love, yet he was not far from the point at which he might have offered his hand. He knew that Miss Wharncliffe's equal in manners and intelligence he might not soon again meet with. Her person, though it was not one he would have selected out of many, was still sufficiently agreeable not to be an objection; her temper, for aught he had seen to the contrary, was not to be found fault with; but beyond this, all was uncertainty. Where were the strong affection, the high moral qualities, which he had always held as requisite to complete the character of the woman he should select for his wife? As yet, he had had no proof that she possessed them. Besides, even if he had felt fully satisfied on these particulars, he was too modest to believe that she was to be won merely at the asking. Of the history and the fortunes of the family he knew nothing. He was confident that they had been accustomed to the higher walks of English society, and had received hints of a family estate leased out for a term of years, but of their object in emigrating hither, he was altogether ignorant, as he was of the extent of their finances. And with this undecided, he sometimes felt that it would be absurd to pre-

sume that a woman of the world, like Miss Wharncliffe, would quietly unite herself with a man of moderate fortune—for his income, dependent of his practice, would have been sufficient for the support of a family—and who might never be able to advance him from a retired country location, where there was little or no society to appreciate her.

Whilst Doctor Witherton was deliberating these things one afternoon in his study, a note was handed to him, written in a female hand more beautiful than any with which he was acquainted in the village. It was merely a request for his services.

"Dr. Witherton will please call, as soon as possible, at Mrs. Harrington's, on the high street, three doors from the last, east side."

"Mrs. Harrington—Mrs. Harrington—I never heard of such a person in the neighbourhood; do you know any one of that name?" said Mrs. Eyeset.

"Mrs. Harrington, sir? that must be the new school mistress," returned the housekeeper who had brought in the note; "a very bad? poor woman! I thought, from what I heard, that she would be obliged to seek you at last;" but without waiting to hear the doctor set off in quest of his patient.

He found the place indicated, a little story, wooden building, unenclosed, and unpainted—one of the humblest in the village—and rapped at the door. It was opened by a pale, but pretty little girl, who replied in the affirmative to his question, "Does Mrs. Harrington live here?" and quickly disappeared into the door of an inner apartment. The one in which she stood was evidently the kitchen, free of dresser containing table furniture, and cooking utensils disposed in the large chimney, yet the little pile of primmers and school books lying on two or three long, low benches indicated that it was also used for a school room.

"Doctor Witherton?" said a voice, coming ringingly, from the door which the girl had opened, and he saw before him a girl of seventeen or eighteen, so lovely that he almost forgot his surprize and admiration, to bow in reply. She held in her arms a tiny infant, apparently little more than a week old, and directed him to the bed where the patient lay, she came to pace the floor, trying to hush the patient's little charge, with a look of such tenderness, as might well have adorned the face of a mother. The invalid was a middle-aged woman, of exceedingly interesting countenance, and a few words from her, together