

'Now, Betty, hinny,' says I, 'tak' my ad-  
vice as your faither and your friend, and  
never speak to that young man again, nor al-  
low him to keep your company; for, as sure  
as my name is Reuben, there is something  
essentially bad about him.'

She hung her head, and there was a tear  
in her eye, and I think, for the first time I had  
observed it in my days, she looked rather sul-  
lun, but I could get no satisfaction from her.  
I think it was between two and three  
months after this—during which time I had  
heard no more of the fashionable  
Charles Austin—that having business to  
transact in Liverpool, I took Priscilla down  
with me in the gig, for the benefit of her  
health. It was in the summer season, and  
even o'clock had chimed from the steeple  
of the collegiate church before we returned  
at night. But never, never shall I forget our  
miserable home-coming. There was our  
dear Rachel, sitting by herself, wringing her  
hands, and the tears rowing down her bonny  
cheeks.

'Rachel! dear, Rachel! what is the mat-  
ter, love?' cried her mother and myself at the  
same instant.

'O Elizabeth!—Elizabeth is away!' sob-  
bed my poor bairn.

Priscilla was stupified, and she repeated  
the word 'Away!' but the truth broke over  
her in a moment; and I sunk back into a  
chair, as helpless, for all the world, as a new-  
born infant.

Rachel tried to compose herself the best  
she could, and she informed us, that  
her sister had left the house about ten o'clock  
of the forenoon, and that she had not since  
returned. She also mentioned, that Eliza-  
beth had been seen in the company of Ch's.  
Austin shortly after leaving the house, and  
that when she did not return in the course of  
the day, suspecting they had fled to Gret-  
na, she had sent my principal clerk, Thomas  
Galloway, after them in a chaise and four,  
to bring back Elizabeth.

Distressed as I was, I admired the pres-  
ence of mind which Rachel had exhibited.  
She had done all that I could have done my-  
self, had I been at home; and a fitter per-  
son than Thomas Galloway could not have  
been sent. His zeal, honesty, and industry,  
which long rendered him a favourite with me,  
and though he was but a young man, I trea-

ted him more as an equal than a clerk. Nor  
had I any doubt but in the mission he was  
sent upon, he would shew as much cour-  
age, if such an article were required, as he  
had at all times shewn zeal and prudence in  
my service.

But Thomas returned. He had heard  
nothing of them on the road, and they had  
not been at Gretna. These tidings threw  
us all into deeper affliction, and a week pass-  
ed, and we could hear nothing of my daugh-  
ter, and our misery increased. But on the  
ninth day after her disappearance, a letter  
arrived from her. It was dated Coldstream.  
My fears read its contents before it was open-  
ed. In it she poured forth a rhapsody in  
praise of her 'dear Charles,' as she termed  
him, and said if we knew his virtues as well  
as she knew them, we would love him as she  
did. She begged forgiveness for the step she  
had taken, and sought permission to return  
with her husband, and receive mine and her  
mother's blessing. She concluded the letter  
by signing herself our 'affectionate and du-  
tiful daughter, Elizabeth Austin.'

'Dutiful!—the ungrateful, the silly gipsy,'  
cried I, flinging down the letter, and tramp-  
ing it under my feet in pure madness; 'she  
shall never inherit a penny of mine—she  
shall never enter my door. She is ruined—  
she has married worthlessness and misery!'

It was some time before Priscilla said any-  
thing, but I saw she was very greatly affec-  
ted. At last, the mother's love for her off-  
spring got the better of every other consid-  
eration in her heart, and she endeavoured to  
soothe me, and to prevail on me to forgive  
Elizabeth and to see her again.

I had intended that the marriage portion  
of my daughters, on the very day that they  
became wives, should be ten thousand each,  
providing that I approved of the match—  
though I by no manner of means wished or  
intended to direct their choice, or control their  
affections, farther than it was my duty as a  
parent to see that they did not throw them-  
selves away. But I was perfectly persuaded  
that to give ten thousand, or the half of it,  
or any sum to such a person as Elizabeth  
had got, would be no better than to fling it  
into the fire.

However, the entreaties and persuasion of  
Priscilla prevailed. I consented that Eliza-  
beth should return, and gave her husband  
five thousand pounds as her dowry, with a