

"Have I not said enough?" she answered, with a most enchanting smile. I snatched her hand, and would have fervently kissed it, but suddenly checked myself and said,—

"But have you considered the consequences?"

"Hardly, I think, or I should not have offered myself to one too proud to take me, or too indifferent to make his affection outweigh my worldly goods."

Stupid blockhead that I was!—I trembled to clasp her in my arms, but dared not believe in so much joy, and yet restrained myself to say,—

"But if you should repent!"

"It would be your fault," she replied: "I never shall, unless you bitterly disappoint me. If you have not sufficient confidence in my affection to believe this, let me alone."

"My darling angel—my own Helen," cried I, now passionately kissing the hand I still retained, and throwing my left arm around her, "you never shall repent, if it depend on me alone. But have you thought of your aunt?" I trembled for the answer, and clasped her closer to my heart in the instinctive dread of losing my new-found treasure.

"My aunt must not know of it yet," said she. "She would think it a rash wild step, because she could not imagine how well I know you; but she must know you herself, and learn to like you. You must leave us now, after lunch, and come again in spring, and make a longer stay, and cultivate her acquaintance, and I know you will like each other."

"And then you will be mine," said I, printing a kiss upon her lips, and another, and another; for I was as daring and impetuous now as I had been backward and constrained before.

"No—in another year," replied she, gently disengaging herself from my embrace, but still fondly clasping my hand.

"Another year! Oh, Helen, I could not wait so long!"

"Where is your fidelity?"