

gifted, so worshipped, so divine, should devote her time, her talents, her affection, to one so unknown, so insignificant as himself, was as extraordinary as it was intoxicating. His mornings were spent in her boudoir—his afternoons in riding by her side—his evenings in wandering through the crowded assembly, restless, fevered, and dissatisfied, till her arm was linked in his, and then—all beyond was a blank—a void—a nullity that could scarcely be deemed existence. His little fair, consumptive sister was almost forgotten ; or when remembered, the sudden pang of having neglected her would strike him, and he would hurry her here and there and everywhere in search of amusement, and load her table with new books, and hot-house flowers ; and kiss away the tears that she had in her eyes ; and murmur, between those light kisses, how willingly he would lay down his life to save her one hour's vexation ; and wonder she still looked fatigued and still seemed unhappy. But by degrees these fits of kindness became more rare—the delirium which steeped his senses shut out all objects but one. Day after day—day after day—Lucy Linton sat alone in the dark, hot drawing-room, and with a weakness, which was more of the body than of the mind, wept and prophesied to herself that she should die very soon ; while her brother persuaded himself she was too ill—too tired to go out—too anything—rather than she should be in the way.....

It is true, Lady Glenallan could not be aware of all these solitary musings ; but it is equally true that she was jealous of Linton's love, even for his sister, and in the early days of their acquaintance, when Lucy used to accompany him to the opera, exacted the most undivided attention to her fair self. Occasionally, indeed, when some charitable dowager had taken Lucy to a party,—and that little pale wistful face passed Lady Glenallan in the crowd, and gave one lingering look of fondness at the brother who was her natural protector, the heart of the admired Countess would smite her, and her arm would shrink from her companion, as she reflected that she did not even return the love she had taken so much pains to secure to herself.