

agitate her breast. The prospect of tranquil content was now before her, but domestic trials soon disturbed the transient calm. Zillah, the wild and intractable Zillah, would not submit to the restraints of conventual life—liberty to roam whither she would—to do as her versatile fancy prompted,—could not be granted consistently with the rules of the establishment, and with less than this, existence was intolerable to her; she had repeatedly appealed to the Franciscan friar, and the countess, for permission to return to her former home; but anxious for her welfare, they refused her request. Ignorant of her guardian's motive for opposing her return, the idea took possession of her mind, that, influenced by the friar, whose contempt of the world and dread of its snares, were often expressed, the countess intended consigning her forever to a cloister. Her aversion to a secluded life acting on her impetuous feelings, led her to cast off all authority. Regardless of the impropriety of the step, and the pain she inflicted on those so kind to her, she fled from the convent, and took refuge with an opera corps, from one of whom she had received instructions in music; every effort was made to induce her to return to the protection of her friends, but in vain; she resolutely declared she had made her election of a walk in life. She had liberty, she said,—she might perhaps win fame,—it was all she wished for. The conduct of her protégé grieved the generous hearted countess; she loved the girl tenderly, and it was a severe trial to see her throw herself in a path of life neither safe or reputable; but deeper sorrow was at hand to wring that poor worn heart. Intelligence arrived announcing the death of her sister, the beloved companion of her youth, the one—the only one in the wide world to whom her heart clung with certain reliance for sympathy and love. Oceans divided them—years had intervened since looks interpreted the feelings of each heart to the other,—new ties were formed; but nothing had estranged the affections that grew with them from infancy.

Mrs. Herbert had married shortly after her sister's departure from England. Her union was a happy one, but of short duration, her husband having fallen in the Egyptian expedition under Sir Sydney Smith, in the second year of their marriage. He left an infant daughter, and to this doubly endeared object, the widowed mother devoted all her care. Faithful to the memory of her gallant husband, she rejected the most alluring offers to enter into a second marriage, cherishing as woman should, those pure and lofty sentiments that raise the true hearted beyond the grave, to a communion with the spirit of the loved one; she lived, as if the death of one, were but a partial separation, leading to an indissoluble union in an enduring world.

Miss Herbert grew up from childhood all a dottering parent could desire,—lovely and good—and

perfected in those accomplishments that give effect to beauty. She had attained the prescribed age for making her debut in the fashionable arena of life, when a sudden and fatal illness deprived her of her mother. The last effort of the dying lady's strength was to dictate to a friend a letter for the countess, imploring of her to extend her sisterly protection to the lovely orphan, to supply in all things a mother's place, now that she was entering on the most eventful period of woman's life,—possessing, with extreme youth, the hazardous advantages of fortune and beauty.

Language cannot describe the affliction of the countess, at this most melancholy bereavement; even the count, stoic as he was in all that did not immediately concern himself, seemed touched by her extreme anguish. His manner assumed a kind and affectionate tone—expressions of sympathy for her loss, mingled with self reproaches for the past, and implied promises of future amendment, tended more than anything in the world could, to alleviate her sorrow. Days long past—when he first sought her love—and that had lain in memory's deepest recess, shadowed by many a dark remembrance, now gently rose before her. Was it decreed that the evening of her life was to repay in its happy setting, the dark and starless time that preceded it? Hope's sweet whisperings glided to her heart. Alas! it was to leave it more dreary than before. The count's suggestion to proceed to England, to bear in person their united condolence, was readily acquiesced in. No doubt of the singleness of his motives, founded upon previous experience, warned her of the fallacy of her trust. Grief is not suspicious.

He departed for England with her full concurrence, to solicit the young Isabella, the heiress of untold wealth, to spend the season of her mourning with her disconsolate relative.

"Yes, my beloved child," wrote the countess, in a letter entrusted to her husband, "we shall weep together, our common calamity; no other heart can sympathise in our deep sorrow, for none can estimate our loss. It is a grief sacred between us—come to me then, dearest Isabella, that I may pour fourth to thee, the pent up feelings of this aching breast—that I may, if possible, fulfil the dying injunctions of your sainted mother. Let me behold her virtues reflected in her child—her child—her life's hope and idol—how dear—how precious is the trust to me."

*To be continued.*

#### OF ABILITIES.

THE abilities of man must fall short on one side or other, like too scanty a blanket when you are asked; if you pull it upon your shoulders, you leave your feet bare; if you thrust it down upon your feet, your shoulders are uncovered.—*Sir W. Temple.*