

to encourage the humble veneration with which I regarded her. I became emboldened to solicit her heart and hand. My mother assured her I was the best of sons. I readily promised to be the best of husbands. She believed us both; accepted me, married me; and on welcoming home my lovely, gentle Mary, all remembrance of past sorrow seemed to be obliterated. Our position in the world, if not brilliant, was honorable. My mother's table renewed those hospitalities over which my father had loved to preside. Mary's three brothers were our constant guests; and Wargrave—the calm, sober, indolent Wargrave—once more became fractious and ill at ease. My poor mother, who could conceive no fault in my disposition,—concluding that, as in other instances, the husband had discovered in the daily companionship of married life, faults which had been invisible to the lover,—ascribed to poor Mary all the discredit of the change. She took a dislike to her daughter-in-law, nay, even to Mrs. Wargrave's family, friends, and acquaintances. She saw that after they had been dining with me, I grew morose and irritable; and attributed the fault to my guests, instead of to the cursed wine their company compelled me to swallow. Fortunately, poor Mary's time was engrossed by preparations for the arrival of her first child, a pledge of domestic happiness calculated to reconcile a woman even to greater vexations than those arising from her husband's irritability. Mary palliated all my bursts of temper, by declaring her opinion that 'any man might possess the insipid quality of good humour; but that Wargrave, if somewhat hasty, had the best heart and principles in the world.' As soon as our little boy made his appearance, she excited the contempt of all her female acquaintances, by trusting 'that Harry would, in all respects, resemble his father.' Heaven bless her for her blindness!"

Wargrave paused for a moment; during which I took care to direct my eyes towards the frigate.

"Among those female friends, was a certain Sophy Cavendish, a cousin of Mary's; young, handsome, rich; but gifted with that intemperate vivacity which health and prosperity inspire. Sophy was a fearless creature; the only person who did not shrink from my fits of ill-temper. When I scolded, she bantered; and when I appeared sullen, she piqued me into cheerfulness. We usually met in morning visits, when I was in a mood to take her railleries in good part. To this playful girl it unluckily occurred to suggest to her cousin, 'Why don't you manage Wargrave as I do? Why don't you laugh him out of his perversity?' And Mary, to whose disposition and manners all these *agaceries* were foreign, soon began to assume a most provoking sportiveness in our domestic disputes; would seize me by the hair, the sleeve, point her finger at me when I was sullen, and laugh heartily whenever I indulged in a reproof. I vow to Heaven there were moments when this innocent foil, made me hate her! 'It does not become you to ape the monkey tricks of your cousin,' cried I, one night when she had amused herself by filipping water at me, across the dessert-table, while I was engaged in an intemperate professional dispute with an old brother officer, 'in trying to make me look like a fool, you only make a fool of yourself!' 'Don't

be intimidated by a few big words,' cried Miss Cavendish, when this ebullition was reported to her. 'Men and nettles must be bullied into tameness; they have a sting only for those who are afraid of them. Persevere!' She *did* persevere; and, on an occasion equally ill-timed, again the angry husband retorted severely upon the wife he loved. 'You must not banter him *in company*,' said Sophia. 'He is one of those men who hate being shown up before others. But when you are alone, take your revenge.'

"It was on my return from a club dinner that Mary attempted to put these mischievous precepts into practice. I was late—too late; for, against my will I had been detained by the jovial party. Mary, who had been beguiling the time of my absence in her dressing-room with an entertaining book, by which her spirits were exhilarated, began to laugh at my excuses; to banter, to mock me. I begged her to desist. She persisted. I grew angry. I bade her to be silent. She only laughed more loudly. I stamped, swore, raved. She approached me in mimicry of my violence. *I struck her!*

"I know not what followed this act of brutality," cried Wargrave, rousing himself. "I have a faint remembrance of kneeling and imploring, and offering the sacrifice of my life in atonement for such ingratitude. But I have a very strong one of the patient immobility which, from that moment, poor Mary assumed in my presence. She jested no more, she never laughed again. What worlds would I have given had she remonstrated—defended herself—resented the injury! But no! from that fatal night, like the enchanted princess in the story, she became converted into marble whenever her husband approached her. I fancied—so conscious are the guilty—that she sometimes betrayed an apprehension of leaving our child in the room alone with me. Perhaps she thought me mad! She was right. The brief insanity inspired by wine had alone caused me to raise my hand against her.

"I knew the secret had been kept from her brothers; for, if not,—fine manly fellows as they were,—nothing would have induced them again to sit at my board. But there was a person whose interference between me and my wife I dreaded more than theirs—a brother of Sophy Cavendish, who had loved Mary from her childhood, and wooed her, and been dismissed shortly after her acquaintance with myself. That fellow I never could endure! Horace Cavendish was the reverse of his sister—grave, even to dejection; cold and dignified in his demeanor; sententious, taciturn, repulsive. Mary had a great opinion of him, although she had preferred the vivacity of my manner, and the impetuosity of my character. But now that these qualities had been turned against herself, might not a revulsion of feeling cause her to regret her cousin? She must have felt that Horace Cavendish would have invited an executioner to hack his arm off, rather than raise it against a woman! No provocation would have caused him to address her in those terms of insult in which, on more than one occasion, I had indulged. I began to hate him, for I felt *little* in his presence. I saw that he was my superior in temper and breeding; that he would have made a happier woman of my wife. Yet I had no pre-