

CHAPTER XVI.

O ! speak to me of her I love,
And I shall dream I hear
The voice, whose melting tones, above
All music,—charms mine ear.

WHILST Godfrey was rapidly traversing the broad-way that leads down to the gates of death, Anthony was regaining his serenity and peace of mind, in the quiet abode of domestic love.

Day after day, those young cousins wiled away the charmed hours in delightful converse. They wandered hand in hand, through green quiet lanes, and along sunny paths, talking of the beloved, and Clary felt no jealous envy mar the harmony of her dove-like soul, as she listened to Anthony's rapturous details of the hours he had spent with Juliet, his poetical descriptions of her charming countenance, and easy figure. Nay, she often pointed out graces which Anthony had omitted, and repeated, with her musical voice, sweet strains of song, by her young friend, to him unknown.

Was there no danger in this intercourse ? Clarrissa Wildegrave felt none. In her young heart's simplicity, she dreamed not of the subtle essence which unites kindred spirits. She never asked herself why she loved to find the calm, noble looking youth, for ever at her side ? Why she prized the flowers he gathered, and loved the songs he loved ? Why the sound of his approaching steps, sent the quick blood glowing to her pallid cheek, and lighted up those thoughtful, serious eyes, with a brilliancy which fell with the serene lustre of moon or starlight, upon the heart of her cousin—to him, as holy and as pure. She loved to talk of Juliet, for it brought Anthony nearer. She loved to praise her, for it called up a smile upon his melancholy face, and the expression of his lofty brow became less stern, and his glance met hers, full of grateful tenderness. She loved to see her own girlish face reflected in the dark depths of those beautiful eyes, nor knew that the mysterious fire they kindled in her breast, was destined to consume her young heart, and make it the sepulchre of her new-born affections.

"It must be a blessed thing to be loved, as you love Juliet, Anthony," she said, as they were sitting together, beneath the shadow of the mighty oak, which graced the centre of the lawn in front of their picturesque dwelling. "Could you not share your heart with another ?"

"Why, my little Clary what would you do with half a heart ?" said Anthony, smiling, for he always looked upon his fragile companion as a child. "Love is a selfish fellow,—he claims the whole,—concentrates all in himself, or scatters abroad—"

"You are right Anthony. I am sure I should soon covet the whole. It would be a dangerous possession, and stand between me and heaven. No,

no it would not be right to ask that which belongs to another—only it seems so natural to wish those to love us, whom we love."

"I do love you, sweet Clary," said Anthony ; "and you must continue to love me, though it is an affection quite different from that I feel for Juliet. You are the sister whom nature denied me, the dear friend whom I sought in vain amidst the world, and its heartless scenes—my good angel, whose pure and holy influence subdues the evil passions of my nature, and renders virtue more attractive. I love you—for I feel a better and humbler creature, in your presence—and when you are absent, your gentle admonitions stimulate me to further exertions."

"I am satisfied, dear Anthony," said the child, lifting her inspired countenance, and gazing steadily upon him. "As you heavens exceed in height and glory the earth beneath, so far in my estimation does the love you bear to me exceed that which you feel for Juliet. One is of the earth, and like the earth, must perish. The other is light from heaven. Evermore let me dwell in this light."

With an involuntary movement, Anthony pressed the small white hand he held to his lips. Was there a leaven of earth in that kiss, that it brought the rosy glow into the cheek of Clary, and then paled it to deathlike whiteness ? "Clary," he said, "have you forgotten the promise you made me, a few days ago ?"

"What was that ?"

"To shew me Juliet's portfolio."

"Oh yes—and there are some lines about love, which I will sing and play to you," said Clary, rising.

"Have you got the music ?"

"It's all here," said the fair girl, placing her hand upon her breast. "The heart is the fountain from which all my inspiration glows." And she bounded off to fetch her harp and her portfolio.

Anthony looked after her, but no regretful sigh rose to his lips. His heart was true to the first impression, to which love had set his seal. His affection for his dear little cousin had been consecrated at another shrine.

Clary returned quite in a flutter with the exertion she had used. Anthony sprang forward to relieve her from her harp, and to place it in a convenient situation.

"Poor Juliet had a great fear of being married for her money," said Clary. "I used to laugh at her, and tell her that no one who knew her would ever remember her money, the treasures of her mind so far surpassed the dross of the world. Yet for all that, she wrote and gave me this little ballad the next morning. I felt very much inclined to scold her for it."

"Let me hear it."

"Patience, Mr. Anthony. You must give me