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ORIGINAL TALE.

Ambrase Mandeville.

BY M. E. H.

CHAPTER II.

(Continued from page 229.)

One morning I knocked at his sitting-room door, but, obtaining no answer, I concluded he was in his chamber, which communicated with the apartment, and had not heard me; and, privileged by friendship, entered the room. It was unoccupied, and throwing myself into an easy chair by the window, which commanded a fine view of the adjacent country, lost in the contemplation of the beauties of the landscape, I had almost forgotten the object of my visit, which was to request the loan of a book on whose merits Mr. Worthington had been expatiating the night before. The shutting of a door below aroused me from a reverie into which I had fallen, where Italian skies and English scenery, my present abode and the dear old family mansion, strange and familiar faces, seemed blended together in a kind of waking dream; half pleasing, half mournful,—one in which Fancy is allowed to dispute the throne with reason. Turning from the window, I was about to leave the apartment, in search of my friend, when my attention was arrested by a slight view of a painting on card board,

partially hidden by larger ones, that lay on the table,—and, supposing it some fancy sketch, I drew it forth. My surprise was almost equal to my admiration, when I beheld an exquisite painting of a beautiful female.

“Is this a portrait of some real or ideal fair one, I wonder?” said I, musingly. “If the former, whose can it be? Not his sister’s, for I have seen her portrait before,—but this, I suppose, is too sacred for the public gaze; it is, no doubt, the *belle ideal* of all his burning thoughts.”

It seemed to me that I could never weary in looking at it, yet it was not merely physical beauty, the beauty of features or complexion, that attracted me. No; it was the spiritual halo which seemed to encircle the countenance, for

“Surely the painter’s hues have caught
The spirit from within.”

The lady was represented as seated in an arm-chair; one white hand supporting her head, while the other held a half-closed book which, apparently, she had endeavoured in vain to peruse. That mournful thoughts occupied her mind, was evident from the expression of her large dark eyes, expressively soft, from which you could almost behold the starting tears, and the slight compression of the crimson lips seemed to betoken the inward struggle to repress the outward manifestation of sorrow. While absorbed in contemplation of the beautiful portrait, Frederick had entered unobserved, and a deep,