

ALTHAM.

BY JOHN S. CUMMINS, ESQ.

CHAPTER IV.

The family were assembled in the breakfast room, next morning, when Henry Dawkins came down,—the party consisted of his father, his only sister, Ellen, who greatly resembled her brother, both in appearance and disposition, and being but one year younger, had been his playmate from infancy, and his cousins, Alice and Isabella Brock,—these latter were the daughters of a distinguished officer, who, being almost always with his regiment, had entrusted the care of their education to his brother-in-law. When a subaltern, he had married the favourite sister of Mr. Dawkins, who had only survived the birth of her youngest child a few hours. The young soldier, though at first completely borne down by his loss, was of too ardent a temperament to allow himself to sink beneath it for any length of time; his adored wife had left him a precious bequest in his too little girls, and for their sakes he determined to acquire at least a competence, and betook himself to his profession with renewed energy. He was rewarded by the attention which its exciting duties required, preventing his mind from dwelling too much on his loss, and by attaining, in a few years, a distinguished name, he had, during the American revolutionary war, made his way up the ladder of promotion, and succeeded to the command of his regiment, on the death of the Colonel, who was killed whilst fighting at its head. On his return, Colonel Brock had paid a short visit to his brother-in-law, and had been enraptured with his lovely daughters. Since he had seen them the eldest had, from a mere child, sprung up to the verge of womanhood. In her, her father was delighted to trace a strong resemblance to her mother; she had the same placid dignity of manner, united with unvarying sweetness of disposition, which had first won the heart of the young soldier; she had also her mother's features,—the same dark eyes too, shaded by their long silken fringes, shone with a tempered light beneath her arched eyebrows; her raven curls hung over a forehead of the purest alabaster,—a critic would in vain have sought a defect in her classically Grecian profile; her character and manner were, perhaps, too grave for her years, yet such was the warmth and kindness of her heart, that she was loved by every one who had the happiness of knowing her.

With the sole exception of the warm-hearted kindness of disposition, which formed a conspicuous feature of the characters of both, no two human beings could be more unlike than

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