

and through the instinct of sensitive modesty, partially recoiled from his passionate pressure.—Mr. Bantwick continued to hold her hand whilst he went on: “You cannot imagine what pangs I have endured whilst under the ban of your displeasure; and I cannot live longer without hearing from your sweet lips my doom, whether of happiness or misery. Speak, dearest, am I to be happy or miserable?”

Miss Dartmouth, colouring deeply, put her handkerchief to her face with her disengaged hand, in order to hide her emotion; a gentle tear moistened her soft blue eye, as it meltingly fell on Bantwick’s, and a gentle, warm, life-inspiring pressure of the hand that grasped hers, was the only answer returned. And what more rapturous one could man wish for? Who that has ever experienced the like could say they would exchange it for all the words that could be uttered? Chauncey was satisfied—extatic feelings filled his breast, and a thrilling joy pervaded his whole system. He clasped the lovely girl in his arms, imprinted a burning kiss upon her rosy lips, and for a moment the hearts of the youthful lovers throbbed in unison, drowned in all the rapturous emotions of that first and never to be equalled embrace. But it was only for a moment that these wild expressions of love were allowed to gain the mastery over sober reason. Emily, who was the first to feel the peculiarity of their situation, quickly disengaged herself from her lover’s arms, and endeavouring to arrange her head dress, which had suffered a partial destruction in the occurrence, said, with a reproachful look:

“This is going too far, Mr. Bantwick. Indeed you ought to have been satisfied with less.”

“I ask a thousand pardons, dear Emily, but I could not withstand the temptation. And then, you know, I wished to make up for time lost while under banishment from your presence,” said Chauncey, laughing.

“You have my pardon for this time, sir, on condition you acquit me of the wrong I have done you in that disagreeable business?”

“Most freely I do, Emily, and were your crime a thousand times greater than it is, it would be more than wiped away, by one approving smile from that sweet face of yours.”

“Come now, have done with your flattery, Mr. Bantwick.”

“I am ever ready to obey your commands, madam; but I beg to say, you have made me one of the happiest of men today, as you but yesterday made me one of the most miserable.”

At this juncture the door opened, and Albert entered, leading in Calista. They had been enjoying a morning walk, and their smiling, blushing countenances told that it had been one of *éclaircissement*. In a word, they had that morning exchanged their vows of love, and they were full of those happy feelings consequent on such an occasion. No sooner

did they enter the room than the two parties instantly conjectured what had transpired between them respectively. Albert shook Chauncey Bantwick warmly by the hand, and welcomed him to his fire-side; whilst the ladies hid themselves to a window to felicitate each other upon their mutual happiness.

Mr. Bantwick soon took leave, and returned home filled with the most delightful anticipations of future bliss. Scarcely a day passed, after this happy reconciliation, without his spending a portion of his time in Emily’s society; and many were the blissful hours they enjoyed together, rambling in the evening shades, through sequestered groves, and over romantic hills and dales, breathing into each other’s ears the warm and glowing feelings of their youthful love. And perhaps there never were two spirits more congenial in temperament, tastes, and disposition than theirs. The beauty and loveliness of their persons and characters rendered them a couple not often to be met with. Being now open and declared lovers, it was in every one’s mouth that they were soon to be married, and all uttered their heartfelt prayers for their prosperity. Even Pestley, from whom the most bitter opposition was expected, *appeared* to participate in the general rejoicings; and Mr. Bantwick was surprised to find him so kind, so obliging, and so good.

Would that we could end our tale here, before this felicitous state of things should be marred by the crosses and bitter disappointments which the future holds in store; but our duty compels us to proceed now, to recount the secret operations of Pestley and his plotting partner.

We will, therefore, just take the liberty to introduce the reader into Mrs. Norvel’s drawing-room; where, on the afternoon of a pleasant May day, whose date was a short period subsequent to Pestley’s last interview with Emily Dartmouth, were collected a select reunion of choice spirits, at the special invitation of Mrs. Norvel, though at the instance of Pestley and Cotts. The party consisted of those two gentlemen, the widow Comstock, Mr. and Mrs. Norval and their daughter.

The intermediate time between the occurrence of the aforesaid event and this meeting, had been occupied by Pestley and Cotts in putting into a proper train, the secret plans, for the maturing of which, all parties interested were now met in full conclave. A perfect understanding had already been come to, in regard to the contemplated marriages of Pestley with Miss Norvel, and Cotts with the fair widow Comstock. These points had been duly settled by proper course of propositions and acceptances, between those parties respectively; and the sanction of parents and friends had been obtained. The object of this gathering being to arrange as to the manner, the time and place, in which these happy events should be consummated; and more particularly, to come to a general understanding in regard