

the hawthorn blossoms, and there surrounded by the old remembered sounds and sights of beauty, to recall the sweet dreams of early life.

Did no warning voice whisper to her that she had made a rash choice—that the bitterness of party hatred outlives all other hate—that the man who had persecuted her husband to the death, was not likely to prove a kind neighbour to his widow. Mrs. Wildegrave forgot all this, and it was not until she had hired the Park Cottage for a term of years that she remembered that Squire Hurdlestone was still living, and still bore the same character.

The arrival of Captain Wildegrave's widow, in their immediate vicinity, greatly enraged the old Squire; but as he possessed no power of indicting women for treason, he was obliged to content himself by pouring forth on every occasion the most ill-natured invectives against his poor unprotected neighbours—wondering at the impudence of the traitor, Wildegrave's wife, daring to lift up her head amongst the loyal community, where her husband's conduct, and his shameful death were so well known! Alas, he knew not how the lonely heart will pine for the old familiar haunts, how the sight of inanimate objects which have been loved in childhood, will freshen into living greenness its desolate wastes. The sordid lover of gold, the eager aspirant for this world's trifling distinctions, feels nothing—knows nothing of this.

Elinor Wildegrave, the only child of these unhappy parents, had just completed her seventeenth year, and might have formed a perfect model of youthful innocence and beauty. Her personal endowments were so remarkable that they soon became the theme of every tongue, and the gossips of the village were not backward in mating the young heiress of sorrow with the richest and noblest in the neighbourhood. Not totally unconscious of her charms, Elinor still shrunk from general admiration; and as their scanty income required the additional labour of her hands in the lighter tasks of sewing and knitting, to make both ends meet, excepting on Sundays, when she accompanied her mother to the parish church, she was rarely seen, and then, the loveliness which attracted such attention was always partially concealed by a large veil.

One of the hall servants happened to meet the young lady one evening, returning home through the park, without this envious appendage, and was so struck with her beauty, that he gave his young master a description of the angel he had met.

"Believe me sir, she is a fit mate for the king. If I were but a gentleman of fortune like you, I should feel proud to lay it at her feet."

Mark heard him with indifference. He had never felt the least tender emotion for the other sex, considering the whole race scarcely superior to the brute creation, formed but to administer to the

wants, and contribute to the pleasures and comforts of man.

"Miss Wildegrave," he said, "might be a fine girl, but he could see no beauty in a woman whose father had died upon a scaffold, and who had no fortune. She and her mother were outcasts, who could no longer be received into genteel society."

The servant, with more taste than his master, shrugged up his shoulders, adding, with a significant sigh:

"Ah, sir! if we could but exchange situations."

A few days after this conversation, Mark Hurdlestone saw, and became deeply enamoured with the lovely orphan.

Although blunt in his speech, and misanthropic in his disposition, at that period, the heir of Oak-Hall was not wholly destitute of the art of pleasing. He was sensible and well read. His figure was commanding, and his carriage good. His stern features were set off by his fine dark hair and brilliant complexion, and the brightness of his lip and eye atoned in some measure for their sarcastic and cruel expression.

Elinor Wildegrave had often remarked to her mother, that if the young Squire had had a better expression, he would have been considered handsome, and she received his passing civilities with the pleasure which a young girl of her age generally feels when regarded with admiration by one so much her superior in rank and fortune. His retired habits, which, at the age of twenty-one, his neighbours attributed more to pride than avarice, (though in truth it was a mixture of both,) flattered the vanity of the artless Elinor into the belief that her charms had touched a heart which had hitherto been reckoned invulnerable. Too romantic to think of uniting herself to a man, whom she could not love, on account of his wealth, Elinor prudently shunned the society of Mark Hurdlestone. She knew that his father had been her father's bitter and implacable enemy—that all intercourse between the families had been strictly prohibited at the hall; and when the heir of that proud demesne made their cottage a resting place, after the fatigues of hunting, requesting a draught of milk from her hands to allay his thirst, or a bunch of flowers from her gay parterres, to adorn his waistcoat, Elinor answered his demands, with secret distrust and terror, although, with the coquetry so natural to her sex, she could not hate him for the amiable weakness of regarding her with admiration.

Alas, poor woman! How often do you sacrifice to this heartless vanity, the peace and integrity of your mind, and, for the sake of winning a smile, unseal forever the fountain of unavailing tears!

Avarice, for a long time, struggled with Mark Hurdlestone's growing passion for Elinor Wildegrave. He could not prevail upon himself to ask the portionless daughter of a felon in marriage.