

A BACHELOR'S CONFESSIONS

stepping briskly along, smacking his dog-whip, whistling quaint ditties, or telling sporting anecdotes, he leaned on my arm, and talked about the approaching nuptials; from whence he made several digressions upon the character of womankind, touched a little upon the tender passion, and made sundry very excellent though rather trite observations upon disappointments in love. It was evident that he had something on his mind which he wished to impart, but felt awkward in approaching it. I was curious to see to what this strain would lead, but I was determined not to assist him. Indeed, I mischievously pretended to turn the conversation, and talked of his usual topics—dogs, horses, and hunting; but he was very brief in his replies, and invariably got back, by hook or by crook, into the sentimental vein.

At length we came to a clump of trees that overhung a whispering brook, with a rustic bench at their feet. The trees were grievously