

paling, and looked sadly and sternly up to the window. His face was deadly pale, and, gracious God! could it be, that tears were upon his manly cheeks, and that they streamed fast from his eyes? There was not a doubt but that my conduct had given rise to this unusual emotion. He loved me, then, in spite of all his pride and unkindness, and while I cursed myself I blessed him, for that demonstration of grief which he poured forth in secret. I staggered to my dressing table, and taking a sheet of paper from my letter case, I beguiled the weary hours in writing the first and last letter I ever penned to my brother. I told him what I had just witnessed, and how deeply his grief had affected me; and I begged his forgiveness for all the anxiety and sorrow that my conduct had occasioned. I then commenced my history with my first meeting with Armyn, until the last, in which he had promised to marry me; and I concluded with imploring him to think as kindly of me as he could, and not to add to my present misery the weight of his continued displeasure.

"Folding and directing my letter, I left it on the table; and with a mind full of sad forebodings, I cast a last look upon my home, and hurried from the house, taking a lonely and unfrequented path that led to the village church.

"The church stood in a lovely valley, surrounded by high hills, and almost embosomed in trees. The morning was cold and bleak; it was the latter end of October, and the wind scattered at every blast the withering foliage across my path. My steps, rustling among the perishing leaves, sent forth a hollow, melancholy sound. I sat down upon a grave—a newly raised grave, then started up with a cry of horror. It was my *father's* grave! Some one grasped my arm. I turned hastily round—it was my bridegroom.

"His face was deadly pale; he too had been weeping. He kissed my cheek and bade me be of good cheer; but there was a mockery of joy in his tone—a fixed and gloomy look in his eye—which made me tremble.

" 'Come, let us sit down,' he cried; 'the priest who has promised to unite our destinies will soon be here. Let us converse philosophically of love, of peace, of the pleasure and happiness to be found in this world, and of the promised joys of the next. What better spot could we find for such mysterious speculations?—what better comment upon them than the graves, and their silent tenants, which surround us?'

" 'Ah! let us not think upon the graves,' said I, with an involuntary shudder, as the fearful vision in my dream returned to my memory.

" 'We are only talking with our friends and

relations,' said he, with a frightful laugh. 'What they are we shall soon be. Shall we ask your father's consent to our merry bridal? His dwelling is near at hand. But it is in vain to knock at the door from which no answer is ever returned. Could the inhabitants of the grave speak, they would tell us that we were objects of pity and contempt, not them. They have possessed all that life had to bestow—have sullenly resigned its baubles and its nothingness, and are at rest. But what remains, unhappy girl, for you and I?'

" 'Oh! talk not in this mocking strain,' I cried, 'at such a time—in such a place; it is sacrilege.'

" 'Well, patience, Jane! when the heart is full the mouth will speak. See, here comes the priest to make the sacrilege of a still darker dye, by uniting those whom God never intended to be one.'

"Before I could answer, the clergyman, followed by his clerk and the sexton, entered the church-yard and saluted us. Armyn gave me his hand, and we slowly repaired to the sacred edifice and approached the altar. In a few minutes I stood by his side, a lawful wedded wife, as I thought; but there was no joy in my heart, though united to the man I madly loved.

"After the ceremony was over, and we were about to leave the church, the clergyman, who was the successor of my dear grandfather, and who was personally known to me, shook us both frankly by the hand, making, at the same time, the usual compliments upon such occasions.

" 'I would rather have seen your brother give you away, Mrs. Redgrave,' he said. 'Your's is a very private wedding; so private that I presume you have stolen a march upon my friend Joshha. Well, I wish you all the happiness in your present union which you can wish yourself. But, mark me, I hate to see a sexton act as father to a young and beautiful bride. I never had but one sister—she made a stolen match of it; and the sexton gave her away—but it proved a sad affair in the end. Her husband left her, and she died of a broken heart.'

" 'A pleasant example for us,' said Armyn.

" 'Oh! but I trust you will be more fortunate,' said the good man; 'but to speak the honest truth—I do not like private marriages. They seldom turn out well. The blessings and prayers of our friends always appear to me as if they hallowed the union of the young and loving.'

"We had now reached the gate that led from the church-yard into the lane, and wishing us all prosperity, the clergyman left us to pursue our solitary way.

"My husband now informed me that I must