

once rejected his suit, and bade his daughter think of him no more. A clandestine marriage ensued; but the banker refused to receive the delinquents, and thus the Don found himself, not only in straitened circumstances, but encumbered with a wife; but he was relieved from his pecuniary embarrassments by the sudden death of his father, and he hastened homeward to take possession of his rich inheritance, and the ducal honors which now devolved upon him.

Don Ferdinand was a man of honorable principles, and though aware that he could easily free himself from his matrimonial chains, every feeling of his heart rose up against such baseness.

"Though I wedded her for her wealth, I will not now desert her," he thought, "for 'twas her father, not herself, that prevented me attaining it, and then she is so very, very young, that she will soon become a convert to our holy faith, and then the smiles of heaven will beam upon me for bringing back this wanderer to the path which leads to life."

But although on her arrival in Spain, the young duchess conformed to the wishes of her lord, in the observance of the rules of his church, her heart was still with the faith and land of her nativity, and she early instilled into the young mind of Donna Clara, who was her eldest child, a deep affection for both. From her very infancy the young Clara was taught to converse in the English tongue; from the little Bible, which her mother had stealthily retained, she became familiar with the source of the protestant faith, and though, like her mother, she managed to deceive the confessor, in her heart she spurned the faith her father loved, and clung to that she dared not openly avow. Can we wonder, that she possessed no fixed principle of right to guide her? Can we wonder, that following the example of her mother, she wedded, ere she had attained, her sixteenth birth-day, by clandestine rites, Sir James Wilmot, then a dashing young man of twenty-two, who in making the tour of the continent, had formed an acquaintance with the duke, who from complaisance to the duchess, ever opened his doors with the greatest hospitality to her countrymen.

The rage of the duke, when apprised of his daughter's marriage, knew no bounds, and Sir James, having uttered some expressions during the altercation which ensued, which might be deemed as wanting in reverence to the religion of the duke, he thought it expedient to get out of the country, to avoid coming in contact with the holy fathers of the Inquisition. As the incumbance of a wife rendered the continuation of his tour any thing but desirable, the baronet deter-

mined to return at once to his own country; and ere he reached its shores, so bitterly did he regret his precipitate union, that he determined to convey Lady Wilmot to his house in Lincolnshire, and there leaving her in retirement, still mingle in the world, and share its pleasures, concealing as long as possible the tie that bound him.

Sir James had no relatives in England, that he regarded as such: an uncle in India, and an aunt in America, were all that remained of the stock from which he was descended; and although distant branches of the ancestral tree still existed; they were thought of, by him, as were the general members of the throng in which he moved. Thus he feared not the inquisitorial eyes of uncles and aunts, nor the laughing jests of a troop of merry cousins. His servants were forbidden to mention the presence of a mistress at Wilmot house; and as but very little of his own time was passed there, his secret was not likely to be detected by chance visitors; Lady Wilmot herself, was not permitted to pass the boundary of her own grounds, and to one who had experienced the restriction, to which the Spanish females are subjected, the privilege of ranging the large and romantic park, was esteemed the acmé of liberty. Thus days and even years passed on, and the once handsome leader of the dance had become the desperate gambler. Though fortune sometimes favored the baronet, he was far from being a successful player, and his wealth, which had been considerable, was fast passing into other hands. His Lincoln estate was his last resource, and he hesitated, as the forms of his wife and children arose to his mind. "She added not to my fortune," thought he, "and surely I have a right to dispose of that which is my own!"—and Wilmot house, and its appendages soon passed into the hands of strangers.

As the gentleman who had advanced him money on the mortgage of Wilmot house had refused to do so, unless the place should remain in his possession until redeemed, Sir James determined to remove his wife and children previous to his visiting it; but where could he place them? he felt that the power of providing for them was no longer his; the love of self had absorbed his every other affection, and in order to relieve himself from the necessity of providing for them, he wrote to the lady Wilmot, informing her that he had been compelled to part with the place, and as he had no home to offer her as a substitute for that she was about to leave, he desired her at once to leave England and return to Spain, where he doubted not they would be well received by the duke.

How did the heart of lady Wilmot bleed as she perused this unfeeling epistle from one whom she