

tion respecting the character and temper of a young lady now under your charge? I mean Miss Eveline Morris."

Mrs. Wilkinson looked surprized. Mrs. Harley continued, "I did intend to include her in the invitation which I just had the pleasure of offering to you, and the pain of hearing you reject; of course I wish my questions concerning her to be considered in the light of a confidential communication, and I should be unwilling to have the interest I take in her made public."

"Will you oblige me by making known the reasons for such inquiry?" asked Mrs. Wilkinson.

"Why, to tell you the truth, it is on my daughter's account that I feel interested in the child. Major Morris visits us very frequently, and I think is strongly disposed to admire my beautiful Mary."

"Major Morris?" exclaimed Mrs. Wilkinson; "pardon my surprize, Caroline, but if I retain my recollection of the very lovely little girl whom I once saw with you, she can scarcely be more than eighteen years of age, while the major is certainly past forty."

"You are quite right, aunt," replied Mrs. Harley, in her most dulcet tones. "Mary is just eighteen, but the major is a very young-looking man, and possesses many advantages."

"He is rich and fashionable, you mean, Caroline."

"It would certainly be a brilliant match for Mary; he is very distinguished in society."

"He is more than that, or I am much mistaken in him," said Mrs. Wilkinson, warmly.

"He is a man of high-toned feelings, of elevated character, and of fine talents. I am not surprized that he should seek a second marriage, for I doubt whether his first was a very happy one, but it is strange he should choose so young a wife."

"Mary is very beautiful, aunt, and I have taken great pains to destroy in her mind those youthful illusions which so often interfere with the prudent calculations of parents."

"What do you mean by youthful illusions?"

"Oh, those romantic ideas of love in a cottage, and disinterested affection, which generally fill a girl's head when she first enters society, and often induce her to throw herself away upon some penniless fellow with black whiskers and a sentimental smile. Mary, though so young, has as much discretion as if she was thirty. She never reads novels, and her knowledge of the world is derived entirely from my experience. It has been my object

to make her understand society as it actually exists. My own preconceived fancies of worldly happiness have given me some bitter hours, and I wished to save her from the pain which we all suffer, when our early dreams fade into reality."

There was a touch of feeling in Mrs. Harley's manner which softened the stern old lady.—"Take care, Caroline," said she, "lest in destroying the romance which grows up in the heart of every woman, you do not root up the generous impulses which are ever entwined with it. She who enters upon life endowed with warm and enthusiastic feelings, must necessarily encounter many sorrows, but that very discipline of grief renders her more capable of bearing her burden meekly; of sympathizing with the afflicted, of practising the disinterested kindness which is a peculiar privilege, and, in a word, of performing those feminine duties which are designed to make her a help, meet for man. I do not admire a calculating spirit in youth. It is so unnatural, so unsuited to the unsuspecting innocence which ought always to characterize that bright season of life, that, schoolmistress as I am, I would rather see the errors of a generous mind, than the undeviating propriety of a perfectly selfish one, which is always correct from motives of interest."

"Well, aunt, for my part, I think those happiest who allow their affections to run in the freest channels."

"Those are happiest who, *having the greatest number of duties to do, perform them best.* A woman is blest in proportion as she ministers to the happiness of others; she may have more sorrows, more calls upon her sympathy, but she has also more sources of enjoyment; for she thus exercises all her faculties—all her affections—and in this exercise consists the secret of woman's happiness."

"I dare say you are right, madam," said Mrs. Harley, politely, suppressing a yawn, "but now let us talk of Eveline Morris. If Mary is to be her step-mother, as I hope she is, I should like to know how the young lady may be best managed."

"*Managed!* how I detest the word," exclaimed Mrs. Wilkinson, warmly; "a child should never be managed. Management implies finesse, and trickery, and concealment, neither of which are necessary in the guidance of children. I have taught school for twenty years, and have never found one who could not comprehend and appreciate plain, honest dealing. Teach young persons with candor, kind-