

to portray the workings of the heart, under those emotions which belong not to the superficial and the vain.

The day so anxiously expected at length arrived, and was opened at an early hour with festivities. The village bells rang a merry peal in honour of the Squire,—and while, in the good old fashion, the tenants were regaled on the lawn with the accustomed cheer, the more important guests wandered over the grounds, content to assume something of an appearance of rural ease. When the day had worn away in the various kinds of amusements that the different classes of visitors were likely to choose, the large room was thrown open, and Tracey and his brilliant cousin led off the ball. In that assembly, there were, of course, none to compete with Lady Florence,—and those who were the envied of their own circles, were content to join in the plaudits that were lavishly bestowed. And Tracey, as he looked on the haughty form, the dark flashing eye, the raven tresses, and the rounded and polished limb, felt rather as one to join in the distant admiration, than to share the converse and bask in the smiles of her he worshipped. His mind dwelt not in the same atmosphere as of yore. There was no longer the delightful tranquillity that had resembled the sweet air of the fields and the woods of his own loved land,—but there was the zephyr of the tropics, heavily laden with the fragrance of the myrrh and the aloe, and the thousand odours that pall upon the senses. To Lady Florence the ardent homage of her cousin was at least not unacceptable. Whether his passion were returned, or her pleasure arose from the vanity of a new conquest, Tracey found it difficult to decide. He was compelled, of course, to leave her at times during the evening to the care of other gentlemen, but so occupied was his mind with continual thoughts of her, that had not his uncle constantly reminded him of his duty as the host, he would have failed in necessary attention to other guests. Heated and wearied with the exercise, towards the close of the ball he left the room and passed out into the shrubbery, to inhale the fresh air. The sound of the music, and the noise of the ball room, reached him so faintly where he stood, as scarcely to form a contrast to the deep quiet of the night. As he wandered through the walks, his mind falling into a natural train of reflection suggested by the scene he had left, he noticed a female seated on one of the rustic benches,—and as it was directly in his way, he stopped for a moment by her side.

“Ah! Lucy,” said he,—“and do you find

the attractions of the night air, and silent musings, preferable to those of the ball-room?”

The person whom he addressed might have been about seventeen years of age, though her symmetrical figure was already sufficiently full and rounded. Her face was beautiful, yet not one, perhaps, to attract attention if seen amid a galaxy of beauty. There was an expression in the deep blue eye of calm and tranquil thought, more profound, indeed, than is usually found in the female features, but which has an irresistible witchery when mingled with grace and loveliness. Her soft auburn hair fell richly over her shoulders, and her broad, clear forehead reclined upon her hand, giving the attitude to the body which it naturally assumes when the mind is occupied in silent meditation.

“Yes,” said Lucy, in answer to Tracey’s enquiry, “I am so unused to the brilliancy of such festive scenes, that the glare and heat became at last insufferable. But you, I presume, have not that excuse for seeking the open air?”

“Is not your presence here a sufficient reason for mine? But I will not attempt the gallantry of a true cavalier to you, who, I know, despise the affectations which fashion would bring into common use.”

“And has that knowledge been obtained within the last week, for it is many years before we have seen each other?”

“True, it is only during the last few days that we can be said to have been acquainted. But it has been sufficient to excite in my bosom a deep esteem for one whose qualities of heart and mind are so lofty and so pure. Let me hope it has also been sufficient to produce that mutual confidence which would have been the fruit of our relationship, had it been accompanied by a longer intercourse.”

“No,” said Lucy, “it is not sufficient. Our relationship, and the knowledge of each other gained by a few days’ observation, will promote such a confidence but little, if the remembrance of our first intimacy has passed away—if the sports and pleasures of our childhood have been forgotten.”

“They are not forgotten,” said Tracey, his natural frankness overcoming a momentary hesitation in his manner. “They are not forgotten; but I will confess that, until a few months ago, the remembrance was more bright and constant than it has since been. From what cause this may have arisen, I know not. Think not, however, that I do not hail a re-union between us with delight. Your presence renews the memory