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BY S.

CHAPTER XII.

He loves my daughter;

I think so too; for never gazed the moon
Upon the water, as he'll stand and read,
As 'twere my daughter's eyes; and, to be plain,
I think there is not half a kiss to choose,
Who loves another best.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN Captain Fitzgerald and Charles returned to dinner, they could not fail to remark the dejected air of Constance, and the traces of tears of which her face bore evident marks. To Captain Fitzgerald's enquiry concerning the cause, she replied merely by saying, that the sultriness of the day had given her a severe headache. Charles, with more penetration, coupled the sudden, unexpected departure of Lascelles, with the agitation which the manner of Constance still betrayed, and easily conjectured what had occurred. With all the magnanimity of a successful lover, he began to sympathize with his unfortunate rival, and to reflect with deep remorse upon his unkind behaviour towards him during the very brief period of their intercourse. But the cause which made the downcast eyes of Constance rest on the ground in deep dejection, and to exert all her self-control to restrain the rising tears, only served to clothe the face of Charles with an expression of triumphant happiness, for he felt that the image alone of one who was very dear, could render the heart of woman insensible to such a man as Lascelles.

"Constance loves me, and I am satisfied," he mentally exclaimed; and then he pictured what

his own state of mind must have been, had Lascelles proved successful in his suit.

"Charles," said Fitzgerald, "I cannot sufficiently express my regret at the hasty departure of Lascelles. How unfortunate that he should have received a letter commanding his immediate presence in London upon business, just as you arrived here."

Ah! well did Constance know from whose lips that billet had come!

"I certainly join in your regrets, Sir," replied Charles, "for I can imagine the pleasure you must have experienced in his society."

"Yes! my dear boy, I have seldom met a young man of Lascelles' age whose talents and means of observation have been so well employed. I was particularly anxious that you should have become acquainted with him, and for this purpose I prevailed upon him to prolong his stay for another week. But such is the life of a soldier—here to-day and gone to-morrow. Many a noble fellow have I met as a stranger, and, after an hour's acquaintance, I have parted from him with as much regret as from a friend, and then we have seen each other no more. Such is life!"

Now that his rival had departed, Charles contrived to monopolise almost the entire time and attention of Constance. For a few days after Lascelles had gone, Constance was sad, and less cheerful than her happy disposition generally rendered her, but the merry laugh and lively conversation of Charles soon won her from this mood. Again he was her companion over hill and dale, and the small white palfrey, the spirited

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