

only knew them from books, and in pursuance of her plans, she wished her daughter to be able to converse fluently in foreign tongues.—She therefore suggested that Carrington should share with his cousin some of the benefit derived from his residence abroad, and that, by a course of reading and daily conversation, Margaret should endeavour to acquire his facility in speaking French and Italian. It may readily be imagined that neither of them undertook the task with much reluctance. For the first time in her life Margaret found perfect sympathy of tastes and congeniality of sentiments; while Carrington enjoyed the purest of all pleasures, an intimate yet passionless communion with one for whom he felt a more than fraternal affection. Had they been subjected to any restraint or suspicion, they would probably have discovered the nature of their feelings, but, content with the thought that Margaret, without any additional expense, was becoming better qualified to dazzle in the gay scenes of continental life, Mrs. Danville looked with perfect complacency upon their intimacy.

"The time fixed for their visit to Europe at length arrived. Carrington Wilson accompanied them, and during the two years that they remained abroad, I knew little of them, except a few vague reports of Margaret's success in society. But, at the expiration of that time, Carrington suddenly returned alone, and the Danville family soon followed. Not long after they were again settled in their home, Mrs. Danville informed me, confidentially, of her troubles, and begged me to exert my pastoral influence with Margaret to turn from the error of her ways. Margaret had fallen in love with her cousin, and for his sake had refused a French Marquis, with more hair on his face than brushwood on his estate—a Russian Baron, with a name longer than his rent-roll—and an Italian Count, with a palace as old as the republic and as empty as his head or pocket. It was quite a terrible affair. Notwithstanding all the money expended upon their tour, Margaret had derived no benefit from it, for, not only had she refused to listen to the overtures of these distinguished foreigners, but she had even threatened to apply to her native Consul, when her parents talked of exerting their authority over her. This was a singular tale to hear of the gentle and timid Margaret, and I repaired to her with a determination to understand the affair more fully before I attempted to use my influence over my young favourite. Her version of the story was somewhat different.

"I know," said she, "that obedience to my

parents is a law of God, but the very words of the Book of Truth teaches that children should 'obey their parents in the Lord;' and surely there was no sin in rebelling against the authority which would have consigned me to temporary and eternal ruin. They would have wedded me to folly and vice, to age and covetousness, to ill temper and irreligion; and I refused—ay, even when threatened with the harshest of treatment—when the tyrannical laws of the land in which we sojourned were about to be exerted to enforce my obedience; when they would have dragged me to the altar a struggling victim, I resolutely refused; and had they persisted, I would have appealed to the laws of my own country to rescue me from such martyrdom. I have been permitted to look upon my cousin as my dearest friend, and now—when the very intimacy which my parents encouraged has become necessary to my happiness—I am forbidden to cherish the feelings which are entwined with my very existence. If Carrington had faults of character to which they could object, there would be some reason in their opposition, but no—the only barrier between us is my mother's ambition, and I have suffered too much from that, to submit now calmly to its dictates. I will not degrade myself by a clandestine marriage with Carrington, but I will never marry another."

"It always seemed to me as if this singular violence in one so uniformly gentle—this

"Unwonted fierceness of the dove, Pecking the hand that hovered o'er its mate," had terrified the sordid nature of her parents. They could not understand this sudden outbreak of impetuous will in a creature heretofore so docile and submissive. I believe they looked upon it as a species of insanity, the incipient stage of madness, and were actually frightened into a compliance with her wishes. Whatever were their motives, they yielded at length to her steadfast purpose, and, when Margaret had attained her twenty-first year, I was summoned to perform the nuptial ceremony. I must confess that I was not sorry for the turn which affairs had taken, for Carrington Wilson was a noble fellow, and I knew him to be worthy of the love of such a being as Margaret. I had never been able heartily to condemn her apparent undutifulness to her parents, because I was certain that they were incapable of judging wisely for a child so unlike themselves; and, therefore, though I have seldom known any good to come from a marriage contracted contrary to the wishes of parents, I was willing to hope the best from this union.