

ed by early habits of charity and benevolence, unacquainted with all sin, even in thought, loving all things from the gentleness of her nature, finding pleasure in the green earth, and drinking innocence from the pure air, moved in her grace and holiness amid the rugged kindred, and the stern tribe among whom she had been reared, like Faith sanctified by redeeming love, and passing over the thorns of earth on its pilgrimage to heaven.

In the adjustment of an ordinary amour with the wife of an officer in the — regiment, then absent in Ireland, but who left his *gude woman* to wear the willow in the village of T—, Rupert saw, admired, and coveted the fair form I have so faintly described. Chance favoured his hopes. He entered one day the cottage of a poor man, whom, in the inconsistent charity natural to him, he visited and relieved. He found Miss Warner employed in the same office; he neglected not his opportunity; he addressed her; he accompanied her to the door of her home; he tried every art to please a young and unawakened heart, and he succeeded. Unfortunately for Mary, she had no one among her relations calculated to guide her conduct, and to win her confidence. Her father, absorbed either in the occupations of his trade or the versions of his creed, of a manner whose repellent austerity belied the real warmth of his affections, supplied but imperfectly the place of an anxious and tender mother; nor was this loss repaired by the habits still coarser, the mind still less soft, and the soul still less susceptible, of the fraternal boxer, and good fellow.

And thus was thrown back upon that gentle and feminine heart, all the warmth of its earliest and best affections. Her nature was love; and though in all things she had found wherewithal to call forth the tenderness which she could not restrain, there was a vast treasure as yet undiscovered, and a depth beneath that calm and unruffled bosom, whose slumber had as yet never been broken by a breath. It will not, therefore, be a matter of surprise that De Lindsay, who availed himself of every opportunity—De Lindsay, fascinating in and consummate in experience—soon possessed a dangerous sway over a heart too innocent for suspicion, and which, for the first time, felt the luxury of being loved. In every walk, and her walks hitherto had always been alone, Rupert was sure to join her; and there was a supplication in his tone, and a respect in his manner, which she felt but little tempted to chill and reject. She had not much of what is termed dignity; and even though she at first had some confused idea of the impropriety of his company, which the peculiar nature of her education prevented her wholly perceiving, yet she could think of no method to check an address so humble and diffident, and to resist the voice which only spoke to her in music. It is needless to trace the progress by which affection is seduced. She soon awakened to the full knowledge of the recesses

of her own heart, and Rupert, for the first time, felt the certainty of being loved as he desired. "Never," said he, "will I betray that affection; she has trusted in me, and she shall not be deceived; she is innocent and happy, I will never teach her misery and guilt!" Thus her innocence reflected even upon him, and purified his heart while it made the atmosphere her own. So passed weeks, until Rupert was summoned by urgent business to his estate. He spoke to her of his departure, and he drank deep delight from the quivering lip and tearful eye with which his words were received. He pressed her to his heart, and her unconsciousness of guilt was her protection from it. Amid all his sins, and there were many, let this one act of forbearance be remembered.

Day after day went on its march to eternity, and every morning came the same gentle tap at the post-office window, and the same low tone of inquiry was heard; and every morning the same light step returned gayly homewards, and the same soft eye sparkled at the lines which the heart so faithfully recorded. I said every morning, but there was once in each week which brought no letter—and on Monday Mary's step was listless, and her spirit dejected—on that day she felt as if there was nothing to live for.

She did not strive to struggle with her love. She read over every word of the few books he had left her, and she walked every day over the same ground which had seemed fairy-land when with him; and she always passed the house where he lodged, that she might look up to the window where he was wont to sit. Rupert found that landed property, where farmers are not left settle their own leases, and stewards to provide for their little families, is altogether a sinecure. He had lived abroad like a prince, and his estate had not been the better for his absence. He inquired into the exact profits of his property; renewed old leases on new terms; discharged his bailiff; shut up the roads in his park, which had seemed to all the neighbourhood a more desirable way than the turnpike conveniences; let off ten poachers, and warned off ten gentlemen; and, as the natural and obvious consequence of these acts of economy and inspection, he became the most unpopular man in the county.

One day Rupert had been surveying some timber intended for the *axe*; the weather was truly English, and changed suddenly from heat into rain. A change of clothes was quite out of Rupert's ordinary habits, and a fever of a severe nature, which ended in delirium, was the result. For some weeks he was at the verge of the grave. The devil and the doctor do not always agree, for the moral saith there is no friendship among the wicked. In this case the doctor was ultimately victorious, and his patient recovered. "Give me the fresh air," said Rupert, directly he was able to resume his power of commanding, "bring