

trials which Maria had daily to encounter, and from his soul he pitied her—"pity it has been said is akin to love," and so it proved with William.

Three years passed on and the only change in Maria was, that the buddings of early beauty now blossomed into maturity, and that chaste, pure mind which had been suppressed by almost unparalleled trials, now burst forth with an energy peculiarly its own, and soaring in its native excellence rose above misfortune, giving to the countenance an expression of animation and loveliness scarcely to be equalled. Maria's heart was also susceptible of kindness; it had been formed in the mould of affection, how could she then live without loving, and whom could she love but the individual whom alone on earth seemed to care for her? if gratitude filled her heart, its overflowings were of a more tender nature, like those of pity, they were nearly "akin to love."

The accumulated trials and mortifications to which she was hourly exposed did not extort even a murmur,—her angelic face still beamed with contentment, unless when she found it impossible to conceal from William their effects upon her feelings, to soothe the anxieties felt by him on her account, to render his perceptions obtuse as to her real situation, or prove to him by an air of cheerfulness that the arrows he witnessed fell harmless, was now the great business of her existence. In truth William and Maria were a pair of interesting lovers, their confidence was so entire, their manners so natural and similar, with minds so superior, and hearts so devoted, that it seldom falls to the lot of any one to be intimately acquainted with a couple so gifted by nature, and apparently so fitted to render each other happy. This state of affairs had continued about two years, and as both were young, delay was of no consequence, seeing that it energized both mind and affection—when a succession of events took place in the merchant's family giving a total change to the monotony of the scene. William who had hitherto been employed only in his father's counting house, had an eligible situation offered him as principal clerk in a firm of great eminence