



"TO RAISE THE GENIUS AND TO MEND THE HEART."

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## POPULAR TALES.

Original.

## THE UNFORTUNATE UNION.

"Look into those they call unfortunate,  
And closer view'd you'll find they are unwise."—Young.

It was a sweet May morning and the new blown flowers of spring lifted up their heads and shed abroad a delightful fragrance in the fresh air; the birds warbled forth their sweetest songs, and as they skipped from bough to bough, seemed conscious the newly-risen sun had come to light up a joyful season over the peaceful cottage of Harville. It was Laura's wedding day, and at an early hour, a happy group of laughing faces had assembled at the mansion of Mr. Harville, in obedience to the general invitation that had been sent throughout the neighborhood. The marriage of an only and idolized daughter which was now to be consummated, was an event which called forth all the generous and anxious feelings, of a venerable and tender father. He had witnessed the progress of this attachment with varied hope and fear—hope, that the youth his child had chosen would prove as virtuous and amiable in after life, as he had affectionate and fond in the short period of courtship's smiling day, and fear, lest a different result would give him cause forever to upbraid himself for permitting the union of his Laura with one who was almost unknown to him. But this was now to have no bearing with her destiny.

Oscar Dudley was already at the side of his chosen one—a tall and beautiful youth with health glowing on his cheek and intelligence, sparkling in his eyes. He stood up before the reverend clergyman and pronounced his vows untrembling, while others trembled even to the fairest of the village maidens. They were then crowned with flowers, and the song and the merry tale went round, and the rustic dance filled up the intervals until the sun retired, and the full moon threw a mellow tint upon the deep shade, and the still quiet that young love delights in, came to succeed the noisy mirth of the gay festival. Dudley had a pretty little residence not many miles from

Mr. Harville's, where he retired with his lovely companion, and devoted his time to its improvement. But there was early observed a shade in his character; he was reserved and often subject to fits of melancholy and ill humor. His companions were chiefly strangers in that country, who came and went without seeking an acquaintance with the neighboring cottagers, and Laura was scarcely permitted to see them. Thus, though he was a man of reputed fortune and she sincerely loved him, and though every thing seemed to smile around the youthful pair; they were not happy; Laura mourned over the lost confidence of her husband, who frequently spent the tedious night in company with his strange companions. Still, however, to a superficial observer, the Dudley's were extremely happy, the surrounding scenery grew more and more beautiful. Oscar was liberal with his purse, and a style of living was adopted at once, neat and splendid, and had Laura been capable of enjoying pleasure without the participation of her husband, she might have made the world all sunshine. But she could not; amid the overflowings of his wealth and in the possession of health and friends, she saw him melancholy and drooping; she watched his cheek day by day, and smiled or wept as she saw it bright or sad. Thus passed two long years, and was spring the third time since their union! One evening as the family of Dudley was seated around their cheerful fire,—it was a dreary night in March, the winds were whistling without, the rain pouring down in torrents, and the earth seemed agitated by the contending elements, the little circle drew more closely round the fire, Laura leaning her head on the shoulder of her husband, silently listening to the storm,—as they were thus seated, the trampling of horses feet were heard approaching; they grew more and more distinct, and presently a loud knocking was heard at the gate of the cottage. Oscar seemed greatly agitated, arose and left the apartment, two strangers made their appearance and inquired for Mr. Dudley. The answer that he was unwell and could not be