

road to literary distinction in the metropolis. This business accomplished, he next arranged all things for his departure; packed up his poem, (that master piece which he made no doubt all Paternoster Row would run to purchase,) settled as favorably as he could with his creditors, leaving only £20 for himself; and then, for the last time, turned his horse's head towards Huntingdon; his mind variously agitated by remorse, pride, and no slight share of conceit, resulting from an anticipated immortality.

Doctor Johnson has well observed that we never do anything for the last time (however confident we may be in spirit) without a certain tinge of gloom. Edward felt this truth; and as he rode along the barren moors towards Huntingdon, and fancied that he should never look on them again, his mind began to sink, and he lingered over every object in his path, even the dull village of Fenstanton, and its still duller neighbour Godmanchester, as friends from whom he was now to part for ever. It was on a fine January evening that he crossed the bridge over the Ouse, and from thence turned down towards the well-known cottage. The river flowed silently beside him, the rushes waved with a slight stir in the wind, and the general desertion of the scene increased his sense of loneliness. He was now hastening towards the little garden which in happier times had so often bounded his rambles. How many long years might elapse before he should again behold it! How many eventful changes might occur—those who now inhabited it might be far, far away; the one dead, the other living, but living no more for him. On entering the drawing room he discovered Laura seated alone and reading by the window. Never before had she looked so perfectly beautiful. Her countenance sparkled with more than usual animation, and her light morning dress, bound at the waist by a single band with a gold buckle in front, and just sufficiently parted at the throat to display its lovely proportions, increased the enchantment of her figure. "Well, truant," she said, throwing back her glossy ringlets with a smile, "so you have come at last, and pray what new tale of scandal or gaiety have you brought with you to make amends for your absence?"

"Gaiety, Laura, I must never feel again, but if a tale of woe—"

"The very thing; now do you know I would give the world for such a tale, for, to speak the truth, I have been so uncommonly happy since you were away, and that you'll allow is a long time—"

"Just three days."

"Well no matter," she added, with a blush, "time in solitude differs materially from what it is in society; but, however, let me hear this tale,