

sons she dreaded and hated to hear. Vanity and the ambition to excel made Sophia readily acquire all the showy accomplishments of the day. She was a fine musician, a tolerable artist, and an elegant dancer; could speak French fluently, embroider tastefully, and make all sorts of pretty fancy toys; nor did her father deny her the means of acquiring these branches of fashionable education, as he conscientiously believed that it was not the use but the abuse of these things which rendered them criminal. Linhope loved music, but he considered that nothing but studying it as a profession could excuse the waste of time that chains a young female to the piano forte for four or five hours every day. Life was never bestowed on any person to be frittered away in trifles like this. Many young ladies who can play the complicated melodies of the present day, at sight, are deplorably ignorant of the most important branches of education. Religion should be the first principle engrafted upon the mind of a child. It should be considered as the most important, and no other acquirement should be suffered to supersede it. If the study of music, languages, and drawing, was granted as the reward for well doing, instead of being made objects of the greatest consequence in a young person's education, they would be pursued with alacrity and pleasure, and would prove as beneficial to the mind as exercise is to the body, and not wept over as weary tasks. Like the dog in the fable, children are too often taught by worldly-minded parents to dress the substance, and turn all the energies of their mind in pursuit of the shadow.

Gentle reader, forgive this long digression, which if it break in upon the thread of my story, is written in the hope of doing good, and emancipating some poor martyr to music from a four hours' daily bondage to the acquirement of a science which was meant for a wholesome recreation, and not intended to form the sole business of life.

Years stole on: the curate's two interesting children were just stepping into womanhood, when the grandson of an old naval officer, who resided in the neighbourhood, came to finish his education under Mr. Linhope's care. Roland Marsham's father had been killed in the memorable battle of Trafalgar, in which action his veteran grandsire had also lost an arm, and was forced from his many infirmities to retire from the service. Roland was a strange eccentric lad—a creature made up of passionate impulses. He possessed fine talents, but wanted perseverance to render them essentially useful to himself or others. Proud, irritable, and self-willed, he resisted alike remonstrance and control, and while his instructor felt an affectionate interest in his welfare, he saw much to dread in the lawless and daring disposition of the boy.

For Alice this youth early formed a strong attachment, and lost no opportunity of making his

love known to the amiable girl who had been his playmate from infancy.

Alarmed at the impetuous declarations of her youthful admirer, Alice sought counsel of her father, who was not a little surprised and annoyed at the circumstance.

"My dear child," he said, affectionately taking the hand of the weeping Alice, "do you love Roland Marsham?"

"Yes, papa," sobbed Alice; "but he does not care for my love. He wants a different sort of affection, and I have no other to bestow."

The good curate smiled, for he was perfectly satisfied that Alice was unconscious of the nature of Roland's passion.

"Guard well your heart, my child, for out of it are the issues of life," he said. "Roland Marsham must never awaken a deeper interest in your bosom. Alice, mark my words, and remember them when my lips are silent in the grave. This lad is no mate for you. Time may change him, perhaps; but his is not a character which will improve in its intercourse with the world. He has no fixed principles; his actions are the result of impulses, which are often sinful. He is a skeptic in religion, a profligate in sentiment, and the madness which exists in his family is the only excuse for the glaring faults which deform his mind, and obscure the fine genius which he possesses. If you love your father, Alice, never unite your destiny with this eccentric young man."

This was enough to deter Alice from giving any encouragement to her young lover; but there were moments when she could not wholly divest her mind of his image, and if she did not love him, she certainly felt a painful degree of interest in all that concerned him. From this critical situation she was fortunately rescued by the lad being placed on the quarter deck, and for years she saw and heard no more of Roland Marsham, and the incipient affection which she had cherished for him was forgotten in events which more nearly touched her heart and feelings.

A few days after the departure of Roland, the good curate was attacked by a dangerous and alarming illness; and his frame, already enfeebled with mental toil and bodily anguish, was unable to contend with the violence of his disorder. From the commencement of his disorder the physician gave no hopes of his recovery.

It was a bleak tempestuous wintry night—the wind swept in hollow gusts round their little dwelling, and the ceaseless plash of the descending torrents of rain dashing against the casements, would at another time have called forth the prayers of Alice for the houseless children of misery, condemned by hard necessity to brave the fury of the storm. Every thought and every energy of her mind, was absorbed in watching the dark shade of