

while the living, dazzling words poured on, an irresistible tide. Who that looked upon his haughty brow, his curved, imperious lip, his brilliant, flashing eye, and the proud carriage of his handsome head, and could read such signs, but must have recognised in the preacher himself the largest measure of that superb passion which, seeming to condemn, his eloquence exalted. One or two sentences I must try to recal—not in the speaker's exact words, for that would be impossible, but in such a manner as to make the reader understand a sudden fancy which arose in my mind while he was uttering them.

“Aspiring to reach the topmost pinnacle of glory, will the hero whose mind is nobly tempered, suffer any obstacle that poverty, obscurity, scorn or oppression can cast before him, to check his career; any temptation to seduce his senses, enfeeble his powers, delay his course, and rob him of the power genius and energy command,—the earthly immortality which crowns them? No! not all the bonds tyranny could cast round him, not all the attractions art or nature can offer, not all the rapture love itself can bestow, will be able to stay his course. He breaks their chains, he tramples their meshes, he scorns their barriers, he despises their delights, marching ever onward and upward to the goal of his ambition. What matters it, if in so doing he must sacrifice many soft and lovely feelings which are his, perhaps, not less than other men, but more? What matters it, if in so doing he must rend other hearts as well as his own? The prize is before him, the victory must be won; and he counts not the cost, he endures the toil, he murmurs not at the pain! For the prize for which he strives is that which Cæsar, Cromwell, Napoleon, grasped—the power of leading and controlling men and nations by one mighty intellect, one indomitable will—a power which lasts even after the conqueror has gone to join the ranks of the silent dead, and makes his name still a spell for strongest conjuration!”

And such is the ambition that stirs within your own soul, Eardley Temple! thought I. But can other emotions be struggling with this master passion? For as he had pronounced the words, “Even the rapture love itself can bestow,” his glance had turned towards that remote corner of the church where the fair peasant girl sat whose beauty had so struck me. She was watching him with the most eager, rapt, absorbing attention, like one whose whole soul was hanging on his words. His glance was probably involuntary, but there was a strange depth of feeling in its expression, a sudden passionate softness blending with its fire and determination, that I well knew no light emotion could have caused. As to the girl, when she met his gaze her face crimsoned, and she bent her head till it was hidden from my view. The next instant, Eardley had looked away, and I did not see him glance in that direction again.