

Emma, for it had been through his hands the money had been conveyed to her protégée as the medium least likely to wound the feelings, already too severely lacerated by misfortune and neglect, his mind being fully satisfied as to the identity of Maria's relationship to his former friends, he hastened with his check uncashed, to the residence of Mr. Penson, and sending up his card requested an audience with Miss Austin, to whom he explained his former friendship and undiminished regard towards her lamented parents, requesting that he might now be permitted the honor of transferring that sincerity of feeling to their daughter, whose esteem he would consider invaluable, being already acquainted with the excellence of her heart and mind, "as the first trifling token of my truth," said the Major, "I must beg to destroy in your presence this check, which I no longer value, except for its consequences, which I prize more than ten times the sum." The last sentence was expressed, and the act of tearing the check had commenced when Maria exclaimed, "stop! I pray you, stop!" at the same time with her extended arm arrested its progress towards destruction,—then pulling the bell, she said, to the Major: "grateful for the affectionate respect you have expressed towards my much lamented parents, and anxious to prove how solicitous I am to take advantage of friendship so generously proffered to their daughter, I will, with your permission, in the presence of my guardian, lay myself under an obligation that will bind me by the endearing bands of gratitude to you for ever."—The servant entering Maria desired him to request that Mr. and Mrs. Penson would give her the pleasure of their company; they instantly obeyed the summons, and received from the gentleman an explanation of his visit and intentions. "And now, my friends," said Maria, "I am going to put your sincerity to the test, before I say one word in acknowledgment for the handsome compliments you have been heaping upon me. Major H..... has kindly tendered me this check, as being now *worthless* to him, I can accept it but upon terms that must be acceded to by all the party. "Turning to Mr. Penson she continued: "it is my wish that it should be immediately