

rock and possessed no enduring life, or whether sown in the good ground, it had taken root, and would produce unfading blossoms for Paradise. Such thoughts never crossed them; fair to look upon was enough, in their estimation, and Beatrice was this in perfection. Lady Brereton, in a short time discovered her quick and susceptible temperament, nor did she scruple to chide her as she would have done a daughter of her own, frequently holding up Lady Julia as a model for her imitation, which never failed to call forth the impatience of our heroine, who conceived a violent prejudice against that young lady, in consequence—this, instead of retaliating, Lady Julia strove to remove by a winning softness of manner, and by many little acts of kindness that could not fail to disarm the warm-hearted guileless Beatrice. Discovering her taste for poetry and works of fiction, she offered to lend her books, with a caution to read them only when alone, as Lady Brereton disapproved of novels for young people; these were a great treat to Beatrice, who, while under the tuition of Mr. Mortimer, and of her sister Mary, had rarely met with such productions, except the most approved, and she carried them in triumph to her room. The pursuits and avocations of Colonel Brereton took him much from home, yet notwithstanding, he contrived to devote a considerable portion of his time to the interesting girl, who, after a few weeks intimate association, had learnt to apply to him on all occasions for advice, or to complain when others vexed or annoyed her, and it was strange to mark how entirely he could throw off that cold reserve and repelling manner habitual to him whenever he addressed her, or listened to her lively, playful conversation; he perceived that she felt not quite at ease in the society of the stately Lady Brereton, and this made him the more assiduous in his attentions, to reconcile her to her separation from her fond and tender mother. There were gay parties almost daily at the Abbey, and many to rival him in his efforts to please, but in no one did she appear to take the same interest, or to feel the regard she evinced for him, nor did she conceal her preference, which at times amused him, when he contrasted it with her early prejudice, while it increased his affection for her, in spite of her many faults; her sudden ebullitions of temper, her determined self will which she never had the art to conceal. Lady Brereton could not forbear feeling astonishment that her son, who had hitherto been unscathed by any tender passion, should thus suddenly have become enamoured of one so unsophisticated and childish as Beatrice, beautiful though she certainly was; but she was too well aware of his determined character to offer him any advice upon the subject, and while she secretly mourned, she trusted that his eyes would become opened in time to see his folly ere he made any declaration of his attachment to its object, Lady Julia took every opportunity to pro-

voked the faults of Beatrice into notice before her, in order to strengthen the prejudices which she delighted to see Lady Brereton had conceived against the thoughtless girl, who but too often gave her occasion to censure her severely. From the warm hearted Sir George Brereton she experienced the utmost kindness and even affection, for while her gay and sportive disposition amused and cheered the old man, her pleasing attentions in bringing him flowers, of which he was particularly fond, when illness confined him to the house, taught him to love her as his own. Things were in this train when one morning, as Colonel Brereton was returning through the grounds of the Abbey to give some orders to Antonio, which he had forgotten on going out, and passing near the flower garden where Beatrice usually spent hours daily, he entered it and discovered her reclining on a mossy bank, overshadowed by the graceful Liburnum, whose golden blossoms nearly swept the ground. On drawing nearer he perceived that she was in a deep sleep, evidently wearied by her labours; he paused to gaze upon her for an instant, when a small volume on which her cheek was resting attracted his attention; curiosity tempted him to remove it very gently, and opening it he found that it was a French novel of a decidedly immoral tendency; he started and bit his lip, then turning to the title page, read the name of Julia Russel.

"Dangerous woman," he muttered, while his countenance grew dark as night; "how dare you strive to contaminate this innocent child?" he reflected a moment whether to awaken Beatrice and question her or not, when the thought struck him, to replace the book by another which he happened to have with him; he then stole away and proceeded immediately to the boudoir of Lady Brereton, where he found Lady Julia as usual at her embroidery frame. Colonel Brereton naturally possessed very violent passions, but education and high polish had taught him the necessity to keep these in check, though in the pale cheek and kindling eye might be discovered the internal storm. He walked up to Lady Julia, and presenting the book, calmly said:

"You will oblige me, Lady Julia, by not interfering in the studies of Beatrice; this work is scarcely one that any woman ought to peruse, much less a young girl whose mind is so totally unformed."

Lady Julia received the book, while her cheek crimsoned.

"Dear me, I am surprised how she obtained it," was her reply; "it is one I preserve as it belonged to my mother—but I never would have allowed Miss Annesley to read it, had I been aware that she had taken it from my room."

"You did not then lend it to her?" enquired Colonel Brereton, with a searching look, under which Lady Julia quailed:

"I did not, Colonel Brereton—you may ask her—