

"It matters not," returned the gipsy, folding her old tattered cloak around her; "they may cast forth their broken bread, to appease my craving hunger—but can they bind up the broken and afflicted spirit, or bring back the lost one to my widowed home? Look on me, Earl, in the pride of thy youth and manly beauty; thine eagle eye scans me as an object of loathing and disgust, even while it seems to pity; you think a wretch like me *cannot* be loved, but it was only last evening," and her voice faltered, and sunk into a hoarse whisper, "that *one* hung on my bosom, and kissed my withered brow, and sobbed as he folded me in his arms, and bade me farewell. Oh God! and I shall never behold him more." And the unfortunate creature, supporting herself on her crutch, burst into a flood of tears, while the child, throwing down the sticks she had been gathering, ran towards her, saying:

"Don't cry, granny—don't cry; daddy will come back again."

It was not in the nature of Lord Blondville to behold such a scene unmoved.

"Tell me your grief," he said, in a tone of the deepest feeling; "who is gone, and how can I aid you?"

"Your aid comes too late," sobbed the mendicant. "My son, my only son, is he who I mourn—he was taken up for deer-stealing, with others, and is under sentence of transportation for life; two of them have been respited, but he who was less to blame than they, being friendless, had none to speak for him, and they have bereaved a widowed mother of her last hope—have torn the strong ivy from around the withered old trunk, which the first biting blast must rend in twain, and leave a dishonoured wreck."

"What is your son's name, and where is he confined?" enquired the Earl, his fine countenance glowing with emotion. "Old woman, he shall not be taken from you, if word of mine can save him."

She wildly clasped her hands together, as she fell before him on her knees.

"Phanuel Harman—in the town jail," was all she could articulate.

"I know him—farewell, granny," said the Earl, throwing down a piece of gold, and waving his hand, as he put spurs to his horse, and galloped off, with the rapidity of lightning, on his errand of mercy.

The Falcon's Nest, the name of Lady Blondville's residence, was situated on a rocky eminence, from which it looked proudly down on the valley beneath, whereon were scattered numerous hamlets belonging to the peasantry. It was a handsome pile; but, from its elevated situation, at some distance it appeared to stand alone, and the first view which caught the eye of Amy, struck a chill on her heart; but this was removed as they drove through the cultivated grounds up to the entrance. Her reception from both the Ladies Clarendon was kind,

and even affectionate, and their delight on again beholding the Countess, and their beloved young brother so recently recovered from his dangerous illness, showed the warmth of their feelings. The evening was damp and chill, although only in the commencement of September, and a cheerful fire blazed on the hearth of the handsome saloon, which was a welcome sight to the travellers. Amy looked with interest on the two sisters; they appeared some years older than the Earl, and certainly did not inherit the same remarkably handsome face and form; but there was all the grace and elegance which usually belongs to high birth, and which amply compensated. In Lady Emily particularly, so much sweetness, so much affability was apparent, that Amy seemed drawn towards her at once, as to a congenial being. From some spual weakness, she was habitually an invalid; and on their entrance, appeared reclining on a couch. Arthur ran towards her, throwing his arms round her, and saying:

"Dear, dear Emmy, I have brought you a new sister, who you must love very dearly indeed. Harold says you must."

"I think I shall hardly need the injunction," replied Lady Emily, smiling, and continuing to gaze in admiration on the beautiful girl of whom she had heard so much. "The affectionate kindness you experienced from Lady Amanda insures her a place in my heart."

Mrs. Somerville felt much gratified at the manner in which both herself and her young charge were welcomed; and now that the corroding anxiety which had disturbed her peace for years, was entirely removed by the death of Father Anselm, she felt a sensation of returning happiness, she had long been a stranger to; and the acquisition gained by their introduction to so charming a family, was most fully appreciated, for the sake of this dear child, whose hitherto very secluded and unsettled mode of life had been a serious disadvantage in many respects, which she was now anxious to repair. Lady Blondville already felt for Amy the affection of a mother, and had held many interesting conversations with Mrs. Somerville respecting her. She did not, however, touch on the subject of the Earl's attachment; but the penetration of Mrs. Somerville required it not. She had noticed it soon after her return, and the discovery made her very happy; but she kept the knowledge fast locked in the recesses of her heart, leaving the result in the all-wise hands of a gracious Providence.

A fine full length portrait of Lord Blondville was one of the most attractive objects in the room where they were assembled. It was a speaking likeness, and the eyes of Amy constantly turned towards it, even while answering the questions addressed to her by Lady Emily, who smilingly noticed her abstraction.