

that it checked them instantly, and sent him to the side of Rosetta, whose vivacity amused while it called forth for the time being a corresponding light tone in him—but this evening he was concerned to see her so changed; her eyes would fill with tears whenever he spoke to her, while her whole deportment expressed anxiety and sorrow.

"She has more feeling than I imagined," he said, after watching her attentively; "would that her young affections were not so hopelessly wasted as I fear they are."

Lady Neville had drawn the rector aside, and appeared conversing confidentially with him, their eyes occasionally directed towards Rosetta, whose hand was linked in that of Blanche as if she dreaded her leaving her. Colonel Lennox viewed them both with interest—wondering at the display of grief so apparent in the young and beautiful girl, at whose age all is usually sunshine. His was a gifted and a noble mind. Allied to a high family, and perfectly independent, he was much courted amidst the gay world, but unspoiled by its flatteries and follies. He beheld the vices and failings of mankind in pity rather than in anger, and while he abhorred the sin he had compassion on the sinner—he was a real patriot, who gloried in his country, and viewed with honest indignation those excited and seditious leaders of faction, who deluding their ignorant countrymen, enticed them from the peace and contentment of their homes and their useful labours, to follow their wicked counsels—filling their minds with fancied wrongs and causing them like Esop's dog, to lose the substance in grasping at the shadow—well he knew that internal disunion must eventually bring ruin on the land so cursed—and that brother rising against brother in unnatural strife, being in opposition to the Divine commands of Christ, can never receive his blessing or his sanction. His notions with respect to women were unusually refined—the slightest dereliction on their part from what he conceived of propriety and becoming reserve lost for them his esteem, although he never was heard to breathe a word of censure, thus the difficulty to gain his good opinion, rendered it still more valued when once it was obtained—affectation and all the little trickeries by which they so often endeavour to fascinate, he despised and laughed at. He wished to behold in them companions, not playthings—nature and not art, holy truth and not its semblance.

Lady Neville now came forward and addressed her attention entirely to him, when soon his polished and prepossessing manners won for him her regards. By degrees the spirits of Rosetta seemed to revive under the cheerful influence of her companions; again her soft blue eyes were lighted up with animation, and her smiles repaid those who sought to amuse her. They would have left early on her account, but she entreated them to remain, and urged Blanche to sing some of her favourite ballads, which

were listened to with intense delight by Lord De Melfort and his friend; at length when the hour approached for the little party to separate, Rosetta held her cousin back as the rest were leaving the room; and clasping her in her arms looked for an instant in tearful agony upon her.

"Rosetta, my beloved cousin," said Blanche, much affected, and kneeling down by her side; "something is pressing heavily on your mind; be it what it may, as you regard your future happiness, and that of your only parent, reveal it to her this night, I implore you."

"Blanche, I dare not; it is too late. Oh, you know not what terrible consequences would follow—even the death of another," and the unhappy girl shuddered as she spoke:

"Rosetta, the consequences are in higher hands than yours," returned Blanche in her most serious tone. "It is unfaithful to confine God's power within our own limits, whatever you feel to be your duty, perform it fearlessly; promise me this, my sweet cousin, and I shall depart full of joy. My aunt is approaching; oh, Rosetta, remember all that you owe to her; speak, for I must leave you. Tell me you will open your heart to your truest earthly friend."

Rosetta faintly smiled. She returned the pressure of her cousin's hand, but she could make no reply, as her mother, who had followed her visitors into the anti-room, now returned.

"Remember," softly whispered Blanche, once more embracing the agitated girl; and then affectionately bidding good night to her aunt, she ran after her father, who she found waiting for her in the hall. The moon was careering high in the Heavens as they emerged, from the avenue on to the heath. Lord De Melfort had again resumed his charge of Blanche, and on their passing the gipsy camp, they beheld their dark forms cowering over the fire they had kindled to dress their evening meal, while ever and anon some old crone would raise the lid of the caldron to see how it fared.

"I should like to know," said Lord De Melfort, laughing, "how much of my good venison is seething there—the keepers make doleful complaints of their missing sundry deer, and I confess these are suspicious neighbours."

"Now, I will not have you say so," returned Blanche, "from my very childhood I have taken an interest in the whole gipsy tribe. There is a romance attached to their wild wandering habits which interests me, and I do think it is hard to see them hunted from place to place, as if they had no right to rest the soles of their feet upon any spot of earth. Are they not God's creatures as well as we; their poverty and rags, place no barrier between them and us in His sight, who looks with compassion and mercy upon all—let us rather seek to inform them and lead them to Him, than drive them like beasts from their lair."