

overcome by the fortitude it had required to utter this, she fell, almost fainting, into the arms so ready to receive her.

Some little time passed ere either were sufficiently composed to speak again. The Earl was the first to recover himself, for he feared the strong agitation she still displayed might injure her delicate frame. He gazed anxiously on her, as her head rested on his shoulder :

"Amy, my beloved," he said, "where is the colour I used to see on this beautiful cheek—who has blanced it thus?"

Amy looked at him half reproachfully :

"I have performed my promise," she replied, "and now I claim one from you—never cast on me the cold, stern countenance you did yesterday, even were I really to deserve it—tell me of my fault, and I will amend it; but oh! Harold, spare me from any thing approaching to anger."

"I promise most faithfully," said the Earl, bending over her; "and thus do I seal it. Amy," he continued, "when I beheld you last night reposing on the bosom of my mother, you looked so unlike any thing belonging to this earth, that I almost expected to see you expand a pair of wings, and fly away. I shall never forget the agony of that moment—but it has passed, and all now before us is full of happiness."

"Build not too much on that supposition, Harold," said Amy, with sweet solemnity—"remember, nothing is certain; let us not, therefore, anchor our hopes in a deceitful harbour, where they may be wrecked, but rather let us raise them above the risk of storms, to those joys which are eternal and unchangeable."

"You shall help me to do so, my fair monitress," replied the Earl, playfully passing his hand over her lovely face; "but, forgive me, if today my ears are closed against your warning. Nay, shake not your head, my Amy—you know I can be serious; but let me continue my inspection of your casket," he added, gaily—"I am determined I will discover all your secrets: what is in this packet, so neatly tied? may I open it?"

"No, no, indeed no—you will think me so foolish."

But the ribbon was already loosened, and the paper unfolded—when a dried flower was all that repaid his curiosity; but in its withered petals he discovered the water-lily which he had gathered for her; he reclosed it again immediately :

"Amy," he said, tenderly, "I will seek for no more—this tells me all I would wish to know, and reproaches me more for my doubts than whole volumes could have done."

Lion, who had been laying at their feet, now rose, and gave a whine of impatience, at the same time yawning, and turning a sidelong glance towards

them, so irresistibly comic, that neither could forbear laughing.

"You are a rude dog," said the Earl, pushing him with his foot: "away, sir, you have not a spark of sentiment in you."

Amy fondly stroked his head :

"How nearly was he sacrificed in flying to my rescue," she rejoined, "such fidelity as that can never be forgotten," and she removed the hair, to look at the wound he had received from the boatman's knife.

While doing so, footsteps were heard approaching, when the door was unclosed, and Lady Matilda, with Miss Courtenay, made their appearance; both started on beholding the Earl and Amy together.

"Harold," exclaimed his sister, "are you aware that the gentlemen are all waiting for you in the hall?—but I beg your pardon, I fear we have intruded most unseasonably."

"Not at all, fair ladies," replied the Earl rising; I had, indeed, forgotten all about my engagement. Amy, dearest," he continued, nodding affectionately to her; "keep Lion back from following me, and take care of him till I return."

As he spoke he hurried from the room. Amy was glad to give her attention to the struggling animal, to conceal her confusion.

"I think Lord Blondville might have left you a more delicate employment than holding his ferocious dog," said Miss Courtenay. Amy looked up at her smiling, but was struck by the expression of countenance she met, displaying as it did—envy, anger and malevolence.

"From that bright colour, I trust we may pronounce you recovered, Amy," remarked Lady Matilda; "you were like a ghost, last night. Poor girl, I was sorry when I heard what caused your distress," and she pressed her hand warmly.

"What an odious cap this is," remarked Miss Courtenay, turning to examine herself at a glass. "How could Tilney persuade me to wear it this morning?"

"What—did it fail in gaining admiration at breakfast," replied Lady Matilda, laughing; "how unfortunate; yet I can assure you it is very becoming, so do not look so unhappy. I saw Lord Rosemount's eyes upon it several times."

"Stupid little wretch, I care not," returned Miss Courtenay; "but do let us leave this horrid room. Who would have green curtains—what a frightful shade they cast." And she looked at Amy.

"Harold did not think so, at least," said Lady Matilda, provokingly; "and you know his taste is perfection. But come to my boudoir, and see if my rose coloured drapery can restore your smiles," and drawing the arm of her friend within her own, they left the room; while Lady Emily, in the same moment, entered from her bed-chamber. Amy went