

frigorated soul of the merchant, and day after day, was Miss Jeffrey with her native charms, fanning a flame, not easily to be quenched.—Nor was she insensible to the effect which these long sylvan walks were producing, and though undertaken only out of courtesy, yet a thousand times over did she regret that the merchant had made his appearance. Her friends soon discovered the attentions bestowed upon their niece, and latterly knowing more of Mr. Thompson's mood, they urged her not to slight, or treat with disrespect the proposals of so worthy a man. "He is wealthy," said the uncle, "and has a good business, and has every comfort at command. He is besides, a respectable person and much esteemed by those who know him. Charles Marshall is in the way of manifold temptations. He is young, ardent and frank, and may by these temptations be overcome and thus you might live to regret your connexion with him, or like your tender, affectionate mother, consume your strength in silent sorrow, wither and die like an early blossom nipped by the untimely frost. His elder brother, has become a sot, and is living at home in indolence, a burden and a daily grief to his parents. Charles may not follow the example, but as yet he is untried. His father is a steady industrious man, but in his youth he was more strictly trained than his sons have been, and was not so liable to be led astray. I would not speak of the thousand snares, which are laid in foreign ports, for the warm hearted, but unwary mariners. It is impossible for them, sometimes to resist the fascinations by which they are surrounded; and the frauds that are practised upon them render them desperate, and ready to commit any amount of folly. Of these things you cannot, of course, form any idea, nor could you without mixing amongst them."

In this prospective manner did Mr. Ramsay reason with his niece, and the reasoning was so far plausible. There can be no doubt it was dictated by affection, and an anxious desire for her welfare. It was true that Alexander Marshall had brought disgrace on the family; but his conduct was no criterion by which to judge of the integrity of Charles,—far less was it a reason, that for that imprudence, Charles's fondest hopes should be destroyed. If he was not already sunk in vice, no course was more calculated to make him so; but it has frequently happened that one worthless member of a family has subjected all the rest to bitter disappointment and mortification. All my observations in journeying through life, confirm the opinion that in the majority of cases where promising young persons have resided from integrity and virtue, the incipient stage of that degeneracy, shows that a secret poisonous influence exerted by selfishness, or the want of due reflection of some one who held the reins of power, has chilled the heart of those most sensitive beings, who seem not so thoroughly humanized, as to be able to grapple with the ills of life. They have their counterpart in the mimosa, whose instinctive sensitiveness, is indicated by the most cautious approximation of the hand, yet if rudely pressed it remains ever after, insensible to the touch; so these febrile and sensitive natures, when suddenly checked in any noble aspiration, are rendered ever afterwards imperious to the dictates, or the demands of reason.

In vain did Helen urge her attachment to young Marshall,—in vain did she say, her heart was with him, and she could not bestow it on another. Persuasions were used on all sides, and she became exhausted in silent grief. A wide swelling ocean rolled between her and the object of her affections. She had no sister, no fond mother, with whom to take sweet counsel,—no one to whisper in her ear the path of duty. Her uncle and aunt had always treated her with the utmost kindness. She was indeed her own, their only, their adopted child, and to them she had implicitly rendered all the obedience of a confident daughter. But still there was an indefinable feeling, that their urgent entreaties were dictated somewhat by selfishness. At length she began

to reason with herself, whether duty called her day after day, to rebel against the will of her foster parents, and in a calm, subdued and pensive mood, her resolve was taken, for weal or woe.

How much more in unison with surrounding nature was the mind of the merchant, when the earnestly longed for answer was obtained. The morning lark sang more sweetly, the swallows whirled more cheerfully, about the window, the gleesome gambols of the leveret, upon the closely cropped lawn, sent a thrill of maiden joy to his heart, and he inhaled the fresh balmy air of the morning,—wasted from the richly clothed meadows as a new principle of vitality, which made his hearts blood bound through his system, with warmth and vigour. The wedding day was fixed, the necessary preparations were speedily made and when the eventful morning came, Helen Jeffrey vowed to be the loving wife of Andrew Thompson.

THE FOURTH STAGE.

'Tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more;
I mourn, but ye woodlands I mourn not for you.

At the conclusion of our last stage was noticed the fact, that the lovely lily of Ivy Bank was transplanted from the scene of her youthful retirement to mingle in the bustle of city life, and to be the "help-meet," of a city merchant not unworthy of the hand and the heart of that fair lady. But, alas! that heart, in softest, sweetest accents, was pledged to be another's. It was the pole star that guided an erratic soul. It piloted the wings on which that soul floated in space, across the trackless wave to a small secluded spot in a little island of the sea. The genial warmth of that heart was the all-propelling impulse, which accelerated the flight of that soul to the little harbour at Ivy Bank, there in the fondest day-dream, to speak of love, as sweet, as lasting as the unfading amaranth. But this star had set; and as surely as the tempest-driven bark is shivered on some sunken reef, when in a dark and dingy night, the compass is attracted by some external influence, and the stars are obscured to the pilot's eager gaze, by the murky clouds which dash furiously across the heavens,—so surely was that fragile being shattered, and destroyed, when the pole star of his affections ceased for ever to guide his mental vision.

Towards the close of the year the friends of Charles, began to feel uneasy at the expected arrival of the Myrtle in London, and Jane,—now in the bloom of rosy youth,—to prevent some one harshly communicating the fact of the marriage, to her brother, wrote a long letter to await his arrival. She announced feelingly and considerately the change at Ivy Bank, and expressed the fond hope, that her brother would have fortitude to bear the severe shock which the announcement would give. After stating the effect it had upon her parents she urged upon Charles to come home a few weeks to enjoy among his friends that change of society and relaxation of mind, which would prevent him from brooding over his unhappy lot. But all the pathos which Jane had infused, all her kind and soothing tenderness, could not check the dark, deep frown, which mantled the mariner's brow, as he hastily glanced over the contents of the epistle, which was handed to him at the wharf by a friend.

Recognising his sister's handwriting in the address he hastily broke it open and began to peruse it, to see what news from home. He suddenly turned his eye to the signature,—he looked at the address—there seemed no mistake, and his whole frame shook violently. He grasped the hand of his friend, and said "come along, I feel thirsty." Nothing further was said, they entered a tavern close at hand, and partook of a little brandy and water. He opened again the ill-fated letter,—and while his friend who knew well the cause of the sudden change of countenance, mused within himself, as to what it were best to say to divert his attention from the melancholy tidings he bad himself conveyed,—the captain snatched up his hat, rose from the table, and said he would return again immediately.

Already had a dreadful project formed in his mind,—his blood rushed more vigorously from his agitated heart, and a wild and unusual glare, beamed from his eye, as he walked rapidly from the gangway of the Myrtle, and descended to the cabin. His life was bound up in one object—that removed,—farther delay on time's stage were unnecessary.

His friend waited with some anxiety his return, to the tavern, but at length his suspicions were aroused, and walking to the wharf, was informed that the Captain had gone below. He swung himself with one bound from the companion door to the cabin floor, but what a scene awaited him! Here lay the young captain stretched upon the floor, his chestnut locks dragged and matted with gore, his dark hazel eyes, glazed and motionless. At his right hand lay a blood-stained razor, which seemed to have been taken from an open dressing case in his state-room, and the blood still issued from a deep wound which had been inflicted.

Mr Simpson was overcome by the appalling spectacle, but speedily recovering himself, he bound a handkerchief round the fatal spot, to staunch the flow of blood. A surgeon was immediately procured, who examined and carefully dressed the wound.

To the earnest enquiry of Mr. Simpson, the Dr. replied that were his patient kept quiet, there need be no apprehensions of danger. The poor captain was therefore carried to a private lodging-house, that he might be more closely attended, and the sorrowing friend, returned to the cabin of his own barque, to write a few lines to Mr. Marshall, to inform him of the sad occurrence.

The melancholy news soon reached the little town, and threw the family into the greatest distress. His poor mother was greatly hurt by the intelligence and indeed never thoroughly recovered, from its lacerating effects. His compassionate sister lost no time, in hastening to watch over him,—although the principal communication at that time was by sailing vessels called Smacks,—and in a few weeks after her arrival, he was so far recovered as to be able to return home. The vessel was left in charge of the mate until arrangements were made. His friends manifested towards him the greatest interest, Jane was constantly by his side, soothing his mind, with genuine, heart-felt sympathy, when it touched the fatal chord; or cheering him, amid the gloomy forebodings by which he was occasionally overcast. So far pleasing was her beneficial society, to his wounded spirit, that if the image of his fond affection, was not effaced from his memory, he could at least look upon that indurated portrait, with a placid consciousness, and reflect in calmness and serenity, upon the beauty and the preciousness of the original. Here, for the present we leave him tolerably well recovered, and in good spirits, while we watch the motions of Joseph, the third son.

He was unlike either of the other brothers. He had not the soft effeminacy of Alexander, nor the sprightly snavity of Charles, but was of a dark, dogmatic, stubborn nature. He was not tall, nor particularly good looking, but had a robust frame calculated to endure fatigue. To several little circumstances which occurred in his youth much of his petulance, and sourness of temper might perhaps be attributed.

It would be useless to attempt to follow him in his career, or to investigate how far the little incidents in which he figured, tended to produce that dogged nature, which he subsequently manifested. Two of these incidents may however be noted, they were related by an eye witness. On one of his Baltic voyages, he arrived at Cronstadt, and the vessel was, as usual, boarded by the officers, from the war ship which lies off in the stream, to examine the manifesto, and search for hidden treasures. They are not so strict now; but at that time they were particularly jealous of all written communications. Whether there was confusion visible in Joseph's countenance, when the officers asked if there were any letters, was not known; but the officers having been often