

"I will not refuse to hear," replied Clara, faintly smiling, "although I have expressed no desire to penetrate your secret."

"And it is precisely on that account that I am resolved you shall know—I wish to reward discretion—therefore, do not blush nor tremble, when I say it was Mr. Bradstreet."

"Bradstreet!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtland and Edward together.

"Is it possible, Anne," continued her mother, "that you allowed him to accompany you?"

"It is possible, mother," she answered rather triumphantly; "and it is also true, that he has engaged to drive me out today. You know we agree in our religious opinions, and consequently shall not be forced to dwell upon that topic forever."

"Clara, my love, will you search for the remainder of this muslin in my apartment?" said Mrs. Courtland, as she beheld the pale countenance of her niece, "and I will endeavour to understand this incomprehensible girl." This opportunity of escape was gladly accepted by the heart-stricken young creature, and she retired to her own room, not to mourn over the blighted hopes of her youth, but to seek and find consolation from one who "chasteneth whom he loveth."

Edward had stood as if thunderstruck, or rather as if wholly absorbed in amazement, but suddenly recollecting himself, he advanced to Anne, who was pacing the apartment in great agitation, and said, "Am I to understand, Miss Courtland, that my late pursuits have so displeased you, as to induce you to shew to a man like Bradstreet this extraordinary condescension?"

"Not at all—not at all; if you were happy in one way, I surely had a right to be so in another. You attached yourself to Clara—and I have likewise"—she hesitated, and her eyes fell before the penetrating gaze of her lover.

"Go on, if you please," he said calmly; "let me learn the worst at once."

"There is nothing more to learn, I am sure," cried the agonized mother. "Anne has suffered jealousy to mislead her, and has acted foolishly and cruelly, but not—"

But passion, the passion of her daughter prevented Mrs. Courtland from proceeding. Anne rudely interrupted her. "Jealousy! humph—can I be jealous of such a poor, canting, spiritless thing, as Clara, when even her own lover has deserted her, and offered himself to me?" The vindictive passions seemed to have taken entire possession of the heart of this unhappy girl, as she uttered these words, and her mother, shocked beyond measure at this wanton exposure of the misfortunes of poor Clara, could restrain her tears no longer, but wept aloud. Edward exerted himself with all the tenderness of a son, to allay this burst of feeling, and having in some measure succeeded, he said, "And now, my dear

madam—my mother, if you will permit me to call you so—suffer me to lead you to your chamber, and then to converse with Anne. I think four differences may be adjusted without much difficulty, after we have mutually explained ourselves."

"God grant it may be so! my valued Edward," cried Mrs. Courtland, as she entered her own apartment; but her foreboding heart told that her fears were greater than her hopes.

The conversation between Edward and Anne was painful, but explicit—with manly frankness he confessed to her his regret for having influenced her mind to doubt the truths of Scripture, and his ardent desire to be so confirmed in the belief of them himself as to be able to lead her to the same conviction. He assured her of his impression that his pursuit of this subject was desired by herself, and that he now firmly believed it would conduce to their mutual happiness in their future connection, to make the commands of God their rule of action. What then was his consternation when Anne told him that all thoughts of such a connection must be relinquished—that she had examined her own heart, and found that it had wandered to another!

"To Bradstreet!" exclaimed the nearly petrified Edward. "Have you consented to be his, Anne?" "I have."

He paced the room in silent anguish for a short time, and then said in a voice that was scarcely articulate, "You have awakened me from a dream of happiness that was indeed too blissful to be realized. And has your own heart no regrets for prospects so long cherished, so delightful as ours? Think, dearest, of all you have permitted me to hope, and suffer this tempest of passion to subside, before you cast me from you forever."

"It is impossible, sir; I have promised to marry Mr. Bradstreet."

"So soon! Then farewell, and may God forgive you for thus destroying my peace!"

But although in the first gush of feeling, Edward thought his peace was forever gone, it was restored to him in a manner he little anticipated—the spirit of enquiry on religious topics was awakened within him, and he sought with avidity the society of such men as could assist his search after truth. His efforts were not in vain; and he was at length, firmly established in the belief of those Scriptures he had once ridiculed and despised; while the peace that passeth all understanding filled his heart with the sweet hope of eternal life. It was then that he felt in its full extent, and deeply mourned, the insatiation that led him to pervert the mind of a woman who loved and trusted him—he confessed the justice which had made him the sufferer from the consequence of his own principles, and when he beheld Anne the wife of a gay and dissipated free-thinker, he almost fancied himself her destroyer, and long,