

the cradle to the grave she is man's truest, firmest friend."

"Uncle, you speak eloquently in behalf of woman's excellence," observed Frank, with a sickly smile. "Such a wife and such a mother I had fondly pictured to myself in Helen Churchill; and if I have expressed myself too hastily against the sex, it was because I loved too well. Surely, dear uncle," he added, "if Helen had loved me she would not so lightly have given me up."

"Lovers, my dear nephew, especially young enthusiastic lovers like you, are apt to expect too much from the object of their affections. Women are placed by nature in more dependent circumstances than men; they cannot at all times act according to the inclination of their hearts; too generally these are forced to yield to the imperative dictates of duty, and the opinions of the world—of a world they dare not despise.

"You acknowledge you were not in circumstances to make Helen your wife, and you were highly offended at her refusing to place herself in a dependent situation among strangers, and separate herself from her family for an indefinite number of years. Pardon my freedom, nephew, but you asked too great a sacrifice."

"How, uncle, was it greater than that from which I was anxious to save her? Was she not about to quit her native land, the happy scenes of her childhood, to become a poor emigrant, to be buried amid the wild woods of Canada? And would not my unwearied exertions have saved her from this dismal change?"

"The risk was too great—you might have changed—your love might have grown cold, and your poor Helen might have lived to mourn the hour when she listened to the voice of blind affection, which had made her an alien and outcast from her family—forsaken by the man she loved, and for whose sake she estranged herself from her natural guardians; cast off by the world—where would have been her refuge, and consolation? Listen to me, Frank, and I will tell you a story somewhat resembling your own, but in which your uncle has been one of the actors.

"You see that new frame house just to the left of this—that with the green Venetians and latticed verandah. That fine house was built by a gentleman whose name is immaterial at this moment—he came hither about two years ago, with his wife and nine children. Unacquainted with the country, with none to advise them, they launched out in expenses which they could ill afford. Strict economy had formed no part of their former practice; the father was a proud man, and the mother pined with restless discontent for those luxuries they had been accustomed to enjoy at home. They had a grant of land, but they would not consent to immure themselves in the forest; so the land was sold at a low

rate, and the proceeds laid out in building the house I pointed out to you, in which they lived freely as long as the few hundreds lasted, and credit was good. They dressed expensively, and kept the best company afforded by our small neighbourhood. Difficulties at length began to arise, and slights to be felt or imagined, for, you know, nephew, that the poor are apt to be jealous of their consequence—certain it is that many of those who used to be foremost in their attentions, began to look coolly on them as soon as their circumstances began to be noised abroad.

"About this period I became acquainted with them, nay almost domesticated in the family, and found myself at all times a welcome guest, in season or out of season. I took an interest in the whole family; but it was the meek, patient, pensive Ellen, that most attracted my regard. It was not her sunny hair, soft features, and delicately tinted cheek, nor the white hand on which that cheek so often rested, that formed the charm which led me so often to her presence. I am too old, Frank, to fall in love with a pretty face alone; it was the expression of sweetness and mild resignation that gave a grace to all she said and did."

"In short uncle, you were in love."

"It was my misfortune rather than my fault, nephew," returned his uncle gravely; "at forty, a man is sometimes apt to forget that he is too old to be the lover of a girl of eighteen or nineteen.

"I began to feel uneasy at the visits of a young gentleman, who came every two or three months to the house of my friend —; an unusual bustle generally preceded these visits. Little did I at first suspect that this young man was the accepted lover of my Ellen, as I fondly in fancy called her. I had even fancied that to her alone he seemed almost an object of dislike; she seemed to shun his society, rather than take pleasure in it. My daydream of happiness was soon to be dispelled.

"One morning on entering the sitting-room, one of the younger girls ran up to me, and holding up a doll, said, 'see here, Mr. Neville, what brother William has sent me, and he is coming again soon to marry Ellen, he says.' At these words I turned my eyes in silent surprise on Ellen. The poor girl rose from her seat in great agitation, and, casting a look of anguish on me, left the room in tears. I sat like one paralyzed; I do not know if my embarrassment of look and manner escaped notice; but my friends, as if unconscious of my presence, began to discuss the approaching nuptials of their daughter with little reserve. I soon after took my leave. That Ellen did not love her intended bridegroom, I felt convinced from her distress and tears. I know not how, but a vague hope that she was not indifferent to me would come across my mind. True, she had given me no proof of her affection, and my age, double her own, ought to have saved me from the vanity of