

yet to come. Taking the paper from her husband's hands, she read it over, and exclaimed:

"That will do very well, but still, I fear, Morton, this ungovernable young man will return, and have an explanation with your daughter. Poor Amy is very inexperienced, and I grieve to say it, very obstinate; but that is your own fault; your long habits of absolute indulgence have rendered her so. She will of course believe him, in preference to us, and the evil will still remain unremedied."

"What am I then to do?" asked Mr. Morton in a despairing tone; "have I not made it as bitter as his worst enemy could desire? Nay, I fear too much so, Louisa;" but his wife making a movement of impatience, he added: "'Tis true, you know him well, and have assured me that nothing short of such harsh words will make any impression on him. I have peremptorily forbidden him ever to approach the house, or correspond with any of its inmates. What else can I say?"

"You must cut off all hope, and leave him without one ray of expectation."

"But how is that to be done?"

"Tell him Amy has solemnly renounced him forever."

Mr. Morton half rose from his chair.

"No! no! that is impossible. Willing as I am to crush his faintest hope, I cannot resort to such unjustifiable means. So far from renouncing him, I am convinced the foolish girl loves him with tenfold ardour."

"So much the worse," said his companion. "Think you that Delmour, while there remains the slightest circumstance to cling to, will abandon his pursuit? Knowing as he does, your child's partiality for him, he will never cease his efforts till poor Amy falls a victim to his interested views. Come, Morton, overcome your reluctance. Consent to this sacrifice for your child. By a few lines you can discourage him from ever making another attempt, and when Amy comes to maturer years, she will gratefully thank you for the prudence which prevented her throwing herself away on a miserable adventurer."

Mr. Morton's scruples were fast disappearing, and at length, with the air of a man thoroughly wearied of the task, he impatiently exclaimed:

"Well! well! do as you like, but let us be quick, for I am tired to death."

It is needless to say his companion promptly complied, and Mr. Delmour was distinctly informed, that Miss Morton, feeling submission to her parent was her first duty, and repenting the dissimulation she had so long practised towards him, solemnly renounced him for ever, in obe-

dience to her father's command. No kind word, no gentle appeal, with which Amy could have softened even that abrupt message, but all was cold, formal, and indifferent. The task concluded, Mr. Morton retired to his couch, with uneasy feelings he vainly strove to dispel, by remembering he had done all for the best. As to her, whose false representations, and artful suggestions, had wrought him up to act as he had done, she closed her eyes with the comfortable reflection, that she was amply, oh, how amply! revenged, on the two beings she chose to consider in the light of her worst enemies. Could she but have seen the motherless girl, in the solitude of her lonely chamber, her head bowed in her hands in the attitude of hopeless grief, she must indeed have been satisfied. The hour that had witnessed the removal of the remains of a beloved mother forever from her sight, was not, perhaps, fraught with more overwhelming agony to Amy, than the present. Then she had at least a living parent, who tenderly loved her, but now, separated as she was from the being next dearest to her, after her father, and the object of that parent's indifference, if not dislike. "Surely," she murmured with a shudder, "he never could have looked at me, spoke to me as he did, if he retained one spark of his former affection." To add to her sorrows, the cheerless prospect of being subjected for years, to the tyranny of such a woman as her stepmother, a woman whose influence was increasing every day over her husband, till it threatened to become all-powerful, rose to her recollection, and it is not wonderful, if in the bitterness of her grief, she murmured a passionate regret that she had not followed her mother to her grave, ere her father had taken another wife to his bosom.

CHAPTER V.

THE next day, Amy remained in her room, and indeed she required repose. Her want of rest,—for the dawn of morning found her absorbed in her sad reflections,—the agitation she had undergone, and the long night passed in tears and sorrow, imparted a pallor to her cheek, and a heavy, care-worn expression to her brow, unnatural to one so young. But a keener pang was yet in store for her. That evening, a note was handed to her. One hasty look at the superscription, and she impatiently tore open the seal, but how her countenance changed as she glanced at its contents. How quickly the warm, happy glow, that had mounted to her temples, was succeeded by a look of wild astonishment and despair. The first words chilled her to the heart—