

# THE AMARANTH.

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{ Vol. I.

RAYMOND.—(Concluded.)

HAVING once fairly entered on his duties as an usher, Henry followed them up with as much zeal as he could muster. But the monotonous drudgery of his vocation—perhaps the most repulsive of any to which a poor man can be subjected—soon began to wear away what little remained of freshness and ardor in his character. Mr. Dobbs, too, though a cordial and well-natured fellow in his way, when nothing occurred to disturb his self-complacency, was one of those fellows with whom he found it impossible to sympathise. His very excellencies were annoying, for his good temper was apt to assume a patronising form, and his ignorance and vanity met Raymond at every turn. Occasionally, too, he would be seized with fits of sulkiness, and then nothing that his usher did could please him. Henry's temper was sorely tried by these ebullitions; nevertheless, he allowed no angry word to escape him, but strove to maintain an appearance of stoical equanimity.

So six months passed away, at the expiration of which period all that remained of Raymond's capital was twenty pounds! He made many efforts to improve his income, and frequently called on the publisher of his 'Æschylus,' in the hope of hearing some welcome intelligence respecting its sale, but the answer he got was invariably the same; and though on one occasion a letter was put into his hands, written by an eminent Oxford scholar, expressing high admiration of the style in which the translation was executed, yet this barren praise

was all he obtained, with the exception of the revision of a small MS. essay on the Greek drama, for which he was paid a mere trifle.

Such repeated disappointments, combined with the daily vexations he experienced as an usher, soon produced a visible alteration both in his appearance and manner. And Julia! did no change take place in her? Yes, her voice had lost much of its former rich and joyous music; the fire of her eloquent eye was dim; wan dejection had imparted its affecting expression to her still lovely countenance; but her nature was as exemplary as ever. Deep as were her griefs, she bore them meekly and in silence, maintaining in her husband's presence an appearance of serenity, almost of cheerfulness, and striving to infuse into him the hope which she herself had well nigh ceased to feel.

One afternoon Raymond returned home, after his school labours were concluded, more languid and depressed than usual. He complained of headache and flying pains in his limbs, for which, attributing them to a mere cold caught in consequence of having got wet through the previous day, he took no further remedy than just going early to rest. He had not, however, been asleep more than an hour, when he was awoken by violent shivering fits, which so alarmed his wife, who was sitting at work in the room, that she instantly made a fire, and gave him some hot tea, thinking it might warm and refresh him. But the fever, for such it was increased momentarily on him, and by daybreak he was so seriously ill, that