

awe, which that fearful visitor, Death, inspires every one, who, for the first time, marks his approach, had passed away, the young mourner gave full vent to her grief, and bending her blooming cheek to that marble brow, she wept with the bitterness of a desolate spirit.

Her father had been so dear—so immeasurably dear to her heart, that, in losing him, she fancied she had lost all that could render life endurable. Her mother had been dead many years, and Leontius had supplied the place of both parents. It was his eye that had watched over her in the troublous days of infancy, and his voice that had gladdened, with words of praise, the happy years of childhood. In the pleasant spring-time of youth, he had been ever near to guide and protect—to lead her steps in the path of virtue, and her mind to the front of knowledge. He had been parent, companion, friend and preceptor, and Athenais loved as never child loved before. It is a sad thing, the first deep grief of a young, fond heart. As a desolating storm would bruise and blight the gentle tenants of a flower-garden, so does that tempest of the soul destroy its tender blossoms of feeling, and lay waste its beautiful buds of hope. But although terrible in its effects, it is transient in duration, and passes away like the cloud from a summer sky. Youthful emotions are so buoyant and elastic, that they spring back to their former position as soon as the pressure of misfortune is removed. It was thus with Athenais. When the first violence of her anguish had passed away, she could reflect calmly upon her bereavement, and turn to the memory of her lost parent as to something holy and dear. She would sit for hours alone, recalling his every look and tone, and dwelling fondly upon his words of love. At such times she would remember all his precepts, and breathe a prayer that they might guide her safely through the perilous path of life.

With a spirit chastened by sorrow, she sought the home of her brothers. They had lived apart from her since the days of childhood, and they had none of those gentle and pleasant memories which linger so sweetly around the hearts of those who have been reared in the genial atmosphere of home. They received their sister as a stranger, and greeted her with the chilling words of unkindness. They feared she would become a dependant on their bounty, and consume a portion of the patrimony which they had so recently inherited. How strange a passion is avarice—how it contracts every lofty principle of the mind, and chills

every warm emotion of the heart. How it degrades every noble sentiment of humanity! Leontius had withheld his worldly riches from his daughter, in order to bestow all upon his sons, thinking no doubt, that they would gladly share the dowry with their only sister. But the spirit of avarice had entered their hearts, and they grudged the gentle Athenais a home. They frowned upon her when she asked their protection, and unwillingly granted the shelter they were ashamed to refuse. She would have turned away from such unnatural kindred, to seek a home among strangers, but she had been reared in retirement, and knew nothing of life save what she had learned from study, and she dared not go forth into the world friendless and alone. Thus, compelled to accept the boon so ungraciously granted, she became an unwelcome dweller with her inhospitable brothers. But though with them, she was not one of their family, for their firesides never shed a cheering radiance for her, and their household gods never smiled upon her spirit. She was desolate and unhappy—the memory of her father's love and kindness was ever lingering around her heart, making her altered situation more sad and more difficult to endure.

Still in the treasures of the mind, those which her father had deemed so rich a legacy, she found a resource and shield from despair.—There were moments when she could steal from the troublous cares that oppressed her, and forget, in study, and the intellectual pursuits she loved, the many ills to which she was subjected. But even these brief intervals of consolation were denied, and the last flower that bloomed in her darkened pathway, seemed about to perish.

A Roman of high birth, named Marullus, who saw Athenais at the house of her brother, became charmed with her beauty. He numbered more than twice her years, and was a man of corrupt character. He had led a dissolute life, and wandered through the garden of Pleasure, until there seemed not a solitary flower rare and beautiful enough to please his satiated fancy. Surfeited with pernicious sweets, and almost weary of the life that could afford him no enjoyment, he continually sighed for some novelty to awaken the sluggish emotions of his heart. That novelty he seemed now to have found in Athenais. Her beauty at first attracted his admiration, but it was her purity of thought and modesty of demeanour that fixed his attention, and inspired a love such as he had never known before. He looked upon her as a treasure which he had long sought