

THE LENNOXVILLE MAGAZINE.

THE BRERETONS.

CHAPTER VI.

THREE months had passed away since the occurrence of the events related in the last chapter. At first Maud had necessarily been much occupied, for "every one" of course had called to condole with the "poor girl," and every one had gone away with a varying tale of her looks and manner. Some said she was cold, proud and unfeeling; others averred that the manner was assumed to hide her real sentiments; others, again, maintained that she was the same as ever, gentle, yielding, without much character at all, in fact, just the sort of girl to get on with Mr. Brereton. And no one ever doubted that her own—for it was mainly amongst the ladies, the little occupied portion of the community, that the young girl was thus discussed—no one ever doubted that her own opinion was the right one. After that a time had come in which Maud's life was very quiet—dull some would have called it—for she went into no society, and even the state calls had ceased for a while. But if Maud herself had been questioned, she would have said that her life, during this time, had been anything but "dull." She had been forced, as it were, to begin life afresh, to create new interests for herself, to form a new plan for spending her days. Since she had left the schoolroom, much of her time had been necessarily occupied with nursing, now she had many spare hours on her hands, as she was much alone. From morning till night her father was absent; business, he said, required his attention more closely than usual; and when he was at home he was often thoughtful, and at times almost morose. Even the caresses of his daughter, formerly his delight, now failed to rouse him more than momentarily from the gloom which seemed to pervade his whole nature. Sometimes he was restless, and in such moods he would wander from room to room, from the house to the garden, from the garden back again to the house, unable to find peace anywhere. At other times he was like himself again, brisk, imperious, attentive only to his child, whose