

group of young people in their gay city gathered under the shade of ancient trees threw a mass of foliage over the green spot had been chosen for the *fete champêtre*. The party, at that moment, stood arranged in a merry dance, and the black fiddler, seated on a stone, had just struck up the favorite "Moll Pitcher," while a few others, half a dump of chestnut trees in the background, were opening their baskets of refreshments, and peals of merry laughter, arranging themselves on a broad flat rock, covered with snow. In the midst stood the fortune-teller, in a shabby but ragged attire, and brought out a general attention, and brought out a countenance the expression of their impressions—surprise, curiosity, and ill-suspicion.

Arnold had his own purposes to answer, as he said, but he could not, consistently with his character, himself consult a dealer in "dark art." But the female friend who acted in concert with him, came to his assistance, and determined her intention to learn her fortune, she led the woman apart, and while she submitted to be inspected, and thrice cut the ominous, she probably improved the opportunity of her instructions concerning the unsuspicious Sophie.

The revelation of this young lady's future life, was entirely satisfactory, that each one in followed her example; and even the young man, though with avowed incredulity, could not join in the amusement, and hear what the "old sinner" had to say, though, of course, he did not believe a word of it. When Sophie's name, the poor girl could not repress her agitation. She had long pondered and mused in the recesses of her own heart, till her imagination, more and more, in the bitterness of hope deferred, was ready to avail herself of any source which threw light upon her lover's fate. All the prediction of her earnest nature was stirred up, when the sybil looked upon her palm, and in the lines she traced there, the history of her life with startling accuracy, Sophie was startled; a thought of deception never crossed her mind, and she gave involuntary credence to the deception.

"One line of life, pretty one," continued the fortune-teller, "has run darkly, and sorrow has been rife in your young heart; but here is a bright streak—*you have mourned long enough for your lover—he is dead—dead many months ago,—there is one whom you have not liked over-*

much, though he has long courted you, and waited patiently for you; and it is written in the book of fate, that you will soon learn to love him, and will marry him and be happy in spite of yourself."

A faintness came over Sophie—an utter prostration of mind and body—she struggled against it—she forced back the tears from her eyes, and assumed a look of calmness; but the arrow had entered her soul, and from that moment she ceased to hope, and never for an instant doubted Brandon's death.

Deeply and truly did Sophie mourn her lover, and most faithfully was his memory cherished in her heart. But his name never again passed her lips. She strove to rise from her selfish sorrow, and return to the duties of life, but the hateful prediction of the fortune-teller clung to her like an evil spell, and she shrunk from a destiny which she seemed nevertheless fated to fulfil. Arnold no longer persecuted her with his attentions, and his forbearance claimed her gratitude. She saw with pain the depth and constancy of his attachment, and that even his coarse nature was softened and refined by its influence. Long had her friends endured her altered mood with kind forbearance, and her sad grief had long cast a shadow on the bright domestic circle. These thoughts began to haunt her with a feeling of self-reproach. The world had ceased to charm her, but she was not cast off from its responsibilities, or left, a blot upon its enjoyments. If she owed a duty to society, and if she could confer happiness on others, by a sacrifice of selfish feeling, was not her course a plain one, and should she hesitate to accept it?

The struggle was long and painful. Few could understand the sacrifices she made; fewer still gave her credit for the noble but mistaken generosity which led her to cast aside all other considerations in an earnest desire to follow the rigid principles of right and duty. And when, a few months later, Sophie, with a blanched cheek, but firm heart, gave her hand to Arnold, and in simple integrity resolved to bury the past, and faithfully perform her marriage vow, the world smiled maliciously, and said: "So much for woman's constancy!"

And was she happy in her new relations? Alas! with the best intentions, poor Sophie had sadly erred. No woman can expect happiness, who, from any motive whatever, marries a man whom she can neither respect nor love, far less, one whom she has looked upon with contempt and aversion. The familiarity of daily intercourse brought out the coarser qualities of Arnold's