

shine on his solitary path, it was that the bounty of Heaven had yet reserved for him two daughters, in whom he might fondly hope to trace the lineaments and virtues of their mother. The eldest of these girls was just nineteen, the youngest scarcely more than a child, when he opened his hospitable doors for our reception. Unhappily for him, our residence was fated to be longer than I had intended when I consented to pass a few days within his cottage. It occurs with the fever and ague of Walcheren, as with other diseases contracted in campaigns in unhealthy climates, that the malady is most sensibly felt when a state of repose and inactivity has succeeded to the necessity for exertion. We had scarcely begun to experience all the comfort of the transition, which in a few days had produced in our situation, when both Mr. Danville and myself were visited with a dangerous relapse of the disease, the ravages of which we had so lately surmounted. Nothing could exceed the humane attentions, the tender care we received in this crisis of our illness from both Milburne and his lovely daughter—Gracious God! that their solicitude should have met with such a reward. For days and weeks during which the father and daughter watched over my bed with increasing anxiety, I was deprived of all knowledge of what was passing about me, and when the violence of the fever had subsided, the light form of Emily Milburne floated like a shadow before me among the first perceptions of returning consciousness. Her ministering aid ceased not with the moment of danger; and as I slowly recovered my health, she was still the angel that cheered me in those hours of morbid dejection which attended the return to convalescence. My companion had been in still more imminent peril than myself, and the result of his disorder was yet doubtful. He, in consequence, claimed the greater portion of her attention; but it was only shared—as well as that

of her father—in common with myself. I knew not why, but I soon found the presence of the artless girl so necessary to my comfort, that I became peevish and irritable whenever she left me. I felt all that sweetness of joy which the hero of chivalry experienced when his couch was watched by the mistress of his heart.* In a moment of solitude, I ventured to analyse the sensations which, at fifty, made a girl of nineteen ever present to my reveries, and, for the only time in my life, would have given worlds to have recalled the lapse of twenty summers. But it was in vain: I had already chosen my lonely course, and had gloomily resolved, like the sceptic mentioned by Wordsworth, to go “sounding on a dim and perilous way.” I thenceforward thought of Emily but as of one whose happiness I would have laid down my life to ensure. She was, indeed, innocence itself; and there was not a movement nor action of her life which did not speak the utter guilelessness of her character. Her father, I have said, was little versed in the ways of the world; but she had never even mingled with it; and the few families of the vicinity formed the extent of her acquaintance with her species. But why am I fondly lingering over the contemplation of all that she was? I was soon to behold her no more! and had scarcely regained my usual strength, before an order reached me in the tour of duty, to join that battalion of my regiment which was serving in Portugal. I obeyed the summons; and quitted the habitation where I had, without introduction, without a claim, found all the soothing blessings of friendship. Poor Milburne wrung my hand with feelings which, while they ineffectually struggled with utterance, told me more eloquently than volumes, that I had acquired another friend upon earth. His daughter, too, strove not to con-

* Travels of Theodore Ducas, vol. ii. page 98.