

for his daughter's life, and for all thy friendly care ; and the Baron of Loricale acknowledges the debt incurred to the preserver of the daughter of an honoured house. May he learn the name and lineage of the family which claims a boy so gallant for its pride."

There was a strange feeling of dislike—a loathing for which I knew no cause—crept upon me, while I looked upon the time-worn Baron, and as he proceeded with his cant about honour and lineage, I felt all the degradation of my birth, and answered bitterly, "I, my lord, have neither lineage nor family, nor is there a created being who claims blood akin to mine: the woman at whose breast I drank of life would scorn to own relationship with the child she loathed. I am without name, save that I hold by sufferance, and the villagers call me—Walter Malden."

The Baron started and turned pale, as I believed, from owning an obligation to one of birth so mean, but recovering himself he said,

"I am grieved that I have struck a chord that jars so rudely, yet would I ask, whence have you then derived that name.?"

"My sole companion from earliest remembrance, my nurse, is called Dame Bridget Malden, and village courtesy hath added the name of Walter."

The cheek of the Baron became of a yet more livid hue, and he staggered to his seat. I would have called assistance, but he motioned silence.

"I am subject to fits of lassitude," he said ; "but they are of short endurance, and I will speedily recover. Take this," he continued, while he took a purse from the table, "it will be of use to one so friendless. I will see thee again, when I am better."

"My lord, I thank thee," I replied, proudly, "but I came not here to accept of alms. When next we meet, I trust that thou wilt have better learned to command thy feelings, nor thus wantonly insult even a wretch like me."

The Baron's agitation increased, while I turned to take my leave, and a groan came from the deepest recess of his bosom, as the door slowly closed behind me.

Crossing the hall, I was met by the young lord, but I was in no mood to receive his welcome, and hastily mentioning that his father was unwell, I hurried from the castle, and strode towards the hamlet. Approaching the outer wall, I heard the music of a woman's voice, and looking up, my eye caught the gaze of the Baron's daughter. I bowed lowly and passed on.

Such then was my interview with the long descended Baron, and I felt sickened with its result, although I had expected nothing that should have rendered disappointment pain. True, the fancy sketch of the maiden's father had been a fantasy, but what mattered that to me?—and his bearing had been less courteous and noble than I had reckoned

on, but why should I heed that? Could it indeed, be, that it was shame at holding converse with me, which caused the agitation that shook his frame. Could the contamination of another's crime so change the current of his gratitude, that he should forget it all? Was this not enough to wither up the spring of every kindly feeling, and make the fated wretch forget or curse humanity. Whatever blissful dreams there might have idly played around my heart, were chased away ere they had found a lodgment there, and I again felt as I was wont to feel.

Some weeks elapsed, and no event occurred to enliven the dull monotony of my weary life, until at length I was astonished to see a travelling carriage draw up at the door, and the young Baron of Loricale enter the cottage to bid me farewell, previous to his departure on a tour of pleasure among the northern mountains. He was desirous to offer, on his father's behalf, whatever I might judge most valuable to the welfare of my future life, if it were my desire to leave the inactivity in which I had been fostered. My answer was, that I thanked them for all their kindness, but I desired nothing I could not command. He looked at me with a disappointed gaze, and reluctantly bade me farewell.

Clara was now alone. Her mother had long been dead, and her father was too much engaged with his own business to waste much of his time with her, and she was thrown upon her own resources for amusement. She often strolled forth among the cottars, or along the river's brink, into the woodland shades, that skirted her father's wide domain.

Destiny led us to the same haunts, in the woods of Loricale, and they were those which were most lonely. She sought them, for she loved to look undisturbed upon the frowning precipices of nature, and I, because I could there batten in the deepest solitude on my own cheerless doom. At first, I sought not her presence, and she knew not that my eye saw all her wanderings. Familiar with every rock and tree, unobserved I was a guard to her while she gathered the wild flowers, and wove them into wreaths. A female attendant had followed for the first days she sought the forest, but as she became familiar with its devious paths, and secure from intrusion, she often walked forth alone, or with only a playful spaniel to gambol beside her.

But this could not endure forever. It was the morn of a beautiful day, and I had early sought my wonted haunts in the forest, but I roved farther on, that my moody thoughts might not be chased away, even by the fair and gentle girl, and I lay down behind a jutting rock, to think over my own sad thoughts alone.

I was aroused from a reverie by the shrill bark of the dog, and starting up, Clara of Loricale stood before me. Timid and shrinking, she would have retired from my presence, but I hastily approached and craved forgiveness for the alarm my presence had