

were next door neighbors. Mr. Charlston and Clara's father had been early companions of each other. Their children had grown up together, and had been associates at the same school, and although now in unequal circumstances, still looked upon each other as very familiar friends. After the death of Mr. Hazledon, he having died when the family was young, his wife struggled hard against adversity to bring up her little ones. But five years after the death of her first husband she married another, who, unfortunately turned out to be only a worthless and degraded fellow. Clara, by her expertness at needlework, had procured a good situation in a millinery shop. Her brothers, all younger than herself, were also respectably employed.

Frederick and Clara had been passionately fond of each other when children, and as they grew older their affection became more matured; and at length the sympathies of their love were more firmly united by a marriage engagement, the consummation of which was purposed to take place as soon as circumstances would render it favorably convenient. But the basis of life's future prospects, however substantial it may be, is often undermined by some casual innovation; and there is no earthly hope, however bright its radiance may appear, but is liable to be darkened by some event that may suddenly