

JANE REDGRAVE.*

A VILLAGE STORY.

BY MRS. MOODIE.

Unconscious of his infirmity, Rosamond felt a strange embarrassment whenever she encountered the searching glances of the dark expressive eyes of Edgar Hartland. The tea passed over in silence. Mrs. Dunstanville and her friend Mr. Bradshawe, were engaged in discussing affairs which afforded no amusement to Rosamond, and in which she could feel no interest; and she was piqued at the provoking taciturnity of her youthful companion.

"What a noble dog!" she said, at length, endeavoring to draw him into conversation, and patting the head of the fine hound as she spoke; "he seems a great pet."

The provoking stranger smiled and shook his head, then, holding out his hand to the faithful animal, it leaped up upon him; and bending down, he kissed the head of the dog on the very spot which had been pressed by the small fingers of Rosamond.

"What a strange creature!" thought Rosamond; "what can he mean?"

Mrs. Dunstanville, who happened to catch the wondering glance of her niece, and the attempt at gallantry on the part of her silent friend, said with a smile:

"Mr. Hartland labors under a two-fold bereavement, my dear Rosamond. He is deaf and dumb. He is the son of an old and valued friend of mine. I took him from the nurse shortly after his birth, and have felt for him almost a mother's love, while I conscientiously endeavored to supply the place of the dear parent he early lost; you may look upon him as a brother, but, for heaven's sake, my good girl, don't attempt to rob him of his heart."

"Ah! you need not fear," returned Rosamond, blushing and looking down; "I have too powerful a rival in the dog."

"I hope so; I would not have Edgar add to his afflictions the misfortune of falling in love—but I have been very remiss in not introducing you before." Then turning to Edgar, she rapidly ran over some hieroglyphics upon her fingers. He rose, and presenting his hand to Rosamond,

gave hers a hearty, cordial shake, which told her, without the medium of words, that she was welcome.

"You must instruct me in this mysterious language," said Rosamond, "which your friend seems to understand so well. Is it very hard to learn?"

"The easiest thing in the world," said Mrs. Dunstanville. "But if you take him for an instructor, you will learn, I fear, only too fast, young lady. My friend Edgar has eyes that can speak more eloquently than words, and he writes the finest hand I ever saw. Had he been a poor man instead of a rich one, I should gladly have engaged him for a confidential clerk."

"True!" said Rosamond. "He could not, you know, have betrayed secrets. But with all these natural defects, he appears, if we may judge by his countenance, very happy."

"He has his trials too," said Mr. Bradshawe; "but with health, wealth and a very fine person, he is really not much an object of commiseration. Nature in denying him the use of two important agents in her wonderful economy, has almost supplied the deficiency by the surpassing excellence of those that remain. The organs of sight, touch and smell, are most acute, and by the aid of these he is almost compensated for the loss of speech and hearing."

"Ah! don't say so, my friend," chimed in Mrs. Dunstanville. "What can compensate him for the want of hearing the expressions of love and tenderness addressed to him by his friends, and his own incapability of making the feelings of his own warm and affectionate heart understood in return? Blindness is perhaps a greater calamity; but his privations are greater than we imagine them to be."

"I doubt that," returned the lawyer. "First, because he has no idea of the blessing of which he has been deprived—and secondly, because he has been taught to read and write, and through the medium of these two wonderful acquirements he can converse with the minds of men of all ages and countries; and by the aid of the pen, he can, with a little more labor, it is true, communicate