

ing it, she would exclaim: "Why pain her now with this avowal? I will delay a little longer, and O'Donnel will join me in soliciting her pardon."

When Mrs. Douglas remarked to Madame De la Rue, that the country air did not appear to improve the health of Ellen, that lady replied:

"My dear madam, you may rest assured that inhaling the salubrious atmosphere which surrounds this little paradise is not the cause of Ellen's depression. I, who have made the human mind my study, have penetration enough to discover, that her malady has its seat in the heart. Are you aware of no affection she has contracted?"

In vain Mrs. Douglas taxed her memory, to recollect any circumstance that could confirm Madame De la Rue's supposition. O'Donnel, for a moment, presented himself to her mind; but as she thought of the brief period during which their personal intercourse had continued, and could call to memory nothing which could confirm such a supposition, she dismissed him from her thoughts.

"My dear child," Madame De la Rue would frequently say to Ellen, "you must not look so thoughtful. Nothing is so injurious to beauty as thought. You must take plenty of exercise, and become cheerful, and acquire more vivacity. I have formed a delightful plan concerning your future settlement in life; so you must carefully preserve your good looks, or you may frustrate my ambitious project. After a year passed in this delightful retirement," she continued, "I propose to travel for some time, if you, Ellen, will accompany me; and I have firmly resolved that you shall marry a foreigner. Do not smile. I do not intend that you shall proceed as I did. You shall have a German count, Ellen; and only allow me to select him for you. I have dwelt so long among foreigners, that I can easily detect an impostor. So, my love, give yourself no further concern, but leave all to my prudence."

Time rolled on, and still Ellen remained in the same state of uncertainty. At length she formed a plan by which she could effectually ascertain the cause of O'Donnel's prolonged absence, the boldness of which made her tremble, while, at the same time, she felt resolved to carry it into execution. This was no other than to proceed, in person, to Ardmore, and there learn the cause of O'Donnel's absence. She felt that it was impossible to exist longer in the state of suspense to which she had so long been a prey; and she resolved that, if his absence was voluntary, she would leave him without reproach, and pass the remainder of her days in solitude, till she should find a respite from her sorrows in the grave. If,

on the contrary, he was no more, she might at least weep over his remains, and not, as now, think of him as one who, perhaps, was false and unworthy of her love.

Ellen determined to carry this resolution into immediate execution, and circumstances favored her. A short time previous, Ellen had received a letter from a female friend, urging her to pay her a visit for a few weeks. This friend resided at a small town, situated by the sea shore, which was remarkable for the salubrity of its situation. The distance was not great, and could be accomplished in a day's journey. Ellen now proposed to her mother that she should accept this invitation, and pay the long-proposed visit to her friend. To this Mrs. Douglas acceded with delight, as she thought that the fresh sea-breeze, and bracing air, might improve the health of her daughter; and this desire of Ellen intimated an interest in every-day matters which she had for some time past ceased to feel.

Mrs. Douglas, however, proposed that she should accompany her daughter to her intended destination, and return immediately; but Ellen, urging that it was only one day's journey, objected to her mother undergoing such fatigue upon her account.

Mrs. Douglas yielded to Ellen's solicitations to allow her to proceed alone, without the slightest apprehension.

In the course of a few days, Ellen set out upon her journey, after having promised to write to her mother upon her arrival; and with many a kind adieu from Madame De la Rue and her mother, she departed.

What were now the feelings of Ellen Douglas, as she found herself travelling towards Ardmore, with a speed, which, at one moment, she thought too slow, and the next, shrunk back in the coach, as if to retard? A tumult of conflicting emotions distracted her mind; and it required her utmost self-command to maintain a calm exterior.

As she drew her veil over her face, and leant back in the coach, as if to avoid observation, she could not but tremble, when she thought what, perhaps, would be the result of this bold project of hers. O'Donnel might be dead—he might have already repented of the indissoluble tie which he had so rashly formed with the portionless girl! One consolation she at least possessed: she should know the worst at once, and be left no longer a prey to torturing doubt.

After a day's travelling, which took her through the very village which was the destination to which her unsuspecting mother thought she had proceeded, she embarked on board a boat, which immediately set sail. Another day passed, and