

a strict enquirer, she would probably have observed that the expression of Emma's countenance denoted more than her little palpitating heart might have chosen to express! But the good old soul was no physiognomist: she contented herself by slowly taking out her purse to pay the postage, allowing Emma ample time to peruse undisturbed the effusions of her correspondent, which we will not attempt to say were unwelcomely received; for if Mr. Montague loved and admired Emma for her numerous virtues, she had not felt less estimation for a character which she knew to be formed of the noblest qualities. Opportunities plentifully had displayed themselves before her observation, by which she had been able to judge of the mind and disposition of Mr. Montague, whom she considered in every respect worthy the sacred profession he had chosen; and, upon the strictest investigation of her own heart, she firmly believed that she could be more happy with him than with any other person she had ever known. From such a confession we may naturally suppose that the conclusion was favourable to the aspirant. Having resided three years under the same roof, and meeting every day during that period in society, it was unnecessary, after the declaration had taken place, that any lengthened period should elapse previous to the marriage.

We will pass over the intermediate time, and behold Emma, at the expiration of three months, the happy wife of Mr. Montague. Sir Lionel and his daughters had been present at the wedding: the latter presented the bride with many valuable gifts, while Sir Lionel, not less munificent, desired that he might be permitted to contribute some articles of furniture towards fitting up the parsonage, which, in reality, was a very snug, delightful place. Margaret, of course, was added to the establishment, and the cottage let to a friend of Mr. Montague's, an aged lady, who promised it should be kept in the same good order in which she had found it.

For some few years nothing could exceed the happiness of the worthy clergyman, and no less worthy wife. Piety, virtue, and contentment reigned within their peaceful dwelling, while all around them participated in their joy and shared their happiness. Emma was adored by the neighbourhood: rich and poor loved and admired her; towards the former, her conduct was truly amiable, disinterested, and kind. The breath of calumny never passed her lips,—her heart was too pure to admit either envy, hatred, or malice, or any other vice, which may be deemed a provocative to evil speaking. To the indigent she was a sincere friend; for she not only clothed their nakedness, and satisfied their hunger, but she taught them to be content in their station, and to prepare for a happier change in another and a better world. Her husband was in practice as well as in precept an excellent man.

The second year of their marriage, Emma presented her husband with a son, and the succeeding year gave birth to a daughter; they were both promising children, and the delight of their parents, who could anticipate no pleasure equal to that, of watching their growth, and training their infant minds.

The eldest had just attained his seventh year, when an unexpected calamity, involved Emma and her husband in deep affliction, and gave a sudden adverse change to their prospects. It might with truth be said, that Sir Lionel G—— had never recovered the loss of his wife; he had long been subject to occasional fits of abstraction, which would frequently induce him to retire from the world, and for months live in perfect seclusion. On one of these occasions, he was seized with brain fever, which carried him off before medical attendance had been procured, and unfortunately before his will had been properly signed. This was particularly unlucky for Mr. Montague, for Sir Lionel had specified in a codicil to his will, an order to his son, that the living then held by the Rev. Divine, should remain his benefice, so long as he should continue to perform the duties attached to it as he had hitherto done. This was followed by a request, that he would befriend that gentleman to the extent of his power. The unfortunate nonsignment of the will, however, was pleaded by the young Baronet as sufficient excuse for the non fulfilment of his father's wishes.

The demon of revenge still lurked in his bosom, and hurried him onward to commit the most disgraceful act of injustice that imagination ever conjured up! Repeated instances of Emma's happiness, her attachment to her husband, and her surpassing virtues, had reached him by means of his sisters, who still loved her with unabated affection, and were frequently her guests at the Parsonage, which by this time was converted into a perfect little paradise.

The remains of the heart-broken parent were scarcely deposited in the grave, when the undeserving son, in open violation of every principle of justice, and in direct opposition to the well known wishes of the dear departed, from whom he now inherited not only a title, but a large fortune, alike callous to the dictates of conscience, as to the tears and entreaties of his sisters, sent his steward to Mr. Montague, with a written order to quit the Parsonage within a month, as another incumbent of his own appointing would take possession at that time. Mr. Montague had, in by-gone days, seen sufficient of the young man's disposition to believe that he would not hear remonstrance; he therefore submitted tacitly to an act which he felt to be cruelly unjust. Poor Emma was nearly heart-broken; her residence at the Parsonage had been one of undisturbed happiness, which she had been taught fondly