

to write to his friends an account of his unhopéd for good fortune.

"Congratulate me, George," he began. "I have stormed the citadel. The old Governor has capitulated, and the strong-hold is won."

A hand trembled upon his shoulder. He looked impatiently up from the paper. Charlotte stood in tears before him. Annoyed at her presence, yet not knowing well how to rid himself of the unwelcome intruder, he rose and offered her a chair.

"I fear, William, that I interrupt you."

"Oh! 'tis of little consequence. I was just commencing a letter to go by the post. Have you anything particular that you wish to say to me, just now?"

"William, I had so impatiently looked for your coming! And is it thus, thus we meet?" sobbed the disappointed girl.

"Nonsense, child? How should we meet? As hero and heroine of romance? Here, Charlotte, dry your eyes; I have no patience with such folly. I hate scenes!"

"I had hoped, brother, to have found in you a friend! You were once my friend—the friend of one who is dearer to me than even a brother."

"I am your friend, Charlotte, still. Your friend in the truest sense of the word. But as to that godless scoundrel, I will never give my consent to that marriage. If you wish to retain my esteem and affection you must forget him."

Without answering a word, Charlotte pressed her arm tightly across her breast, and slowly left the room. She seemed deserted by her species; hope expired in her heart, and she murmured, as sheathing herself upon her bed, "Alas! miserable one! why, why were you born?"

The next morning, her pale face and dejectedly quiet appearance, struck Mrs. Stainer. For the first time the idea presented itself to her mind that her step-daughter was ill; that she looked like one far gone in consumption. A stern, but not a hard-hearted woman, she followed her, when prayers were over, into her room, and taking her hand, said kindly, "that she feared that she was not well, and requested anxiously to be informed in what manner she could serve her."

"Give me a companion of my own sex, of my own age. My heart yearns for companionship. I cannot bear the loneliness of my own thoughts."

"Why did not you mention this before, Charlotte? Is Mildred Rosier the companion you wish?"

"Ah!—if she would come."

"What should hinder her?"

Charlotte sighed deeply, for she thought to herself: "The dull house. The melancholy,

conventional looking inhabitants, and she so gay—so happy. She will not come—surely she will not come."

Mrs. Stainer replied, as if anticipating her daughter's doubts; "She will come: I will go this morning with your brother, and fetch her."

"The day is so stormy," returned the desponding Charlotte, glancing at the windows. "You had better wait until tomorrow."

"I never put off until the morrow, Charlotte, what ought to be done to-day. The wind is high; we shall not feel that in the carriage; and as we shall not go by sea, the tempest of waters cannot affect us."

At this moment they were joined by Mr. Strong, who, hearing from Mrs. Stainer, the nature of her visit to Dunwich, and feeling a lively interest in the wild girl they were going to see, declared his intention of accompanying them.

Charlotte watched their departure with feverish impatience, which was only equalled by her disappointment, when the party returned without her young friend. She could hardly refrain from tears, until assured that Mildred had accepted the invitation, and would accompany her brother to the lodge in the morning. This raised the drooping spirits of the heart-sick girl to such an unusual height, that she, in her turn, disappointed her brother, by taking a seat in the carriage on the following morning, to fetch her friend.

"Sisters are always in the way," muttered Mr. William, as he mounted the box and took his seat by the coachman. "If they can spoil an agreeable flirtation with a pretty girl, they never fail to do so. I wish—they were all married."

Mildred Rosier received Miss Stainer with a cheek as pale as her own. A few days of care had made such an alteration in her young friend that Charlotte scarcely recognized her.

"Mildred!" she whispered: "Is your heart robbing your cheek of its bloom?"

A pressure of the hand and a smothered sigh, was the only answer. These were significant, and perfectly understood by her who needed not words to tell what nature had written in the most legible characters in her friend's face, which at that moment was a perfect mirror of her soul. The shades of recent grief hung upon her clear brow, like night clouds upon the glory of the breaking day; though their dark forms were gilded by the beams of the sun, they only served to shew more distinctly that the storm had been there. Mildred had not yet learned that most difficult lesson taught in the world's school, to steel the countenance as well as the heart; to hide beneath a smiling apathy, the host of agonies within. Yet, she was glad to escape from herself, and, kissing her mother and Abigail, her