

sier listened attentively, and even shed some tears, but she declared that she dared not interfere with her son's management of Mildred, and he had resolved upon her staying where she was, in order, as he said, that she might live down the unpleasant scandals that her imprudence had given rise to. For her to leave the place was to confirm the worst suspicions. Mildred, on her part, was quite indifferent where they sent her, or what became of her. The silence of Tasker, like the worm in the bud, was the canker in her heart. She believed that he had forsaken her, and the world became a blank. The summer slowly passed away. Lieutenant Searlett, now perfectly recovered of his wound, had resumed the command of his boat's crew. Many smuggling vessels and their cargoes had been captured upon the coast, but he for whom they were chiefly upon the alert returned no more.

Captain Netherby was a constant visitor at the Brook Farm, and his society had become almost necessary to Mildred, for it was only during his friendly visits, that she was allowed to leave the house, by her imperious brother, and then, only when accompanied by himself, or his commander.

Sometimes when her love of nature and the enjoyment which she always felt while in the fresh sea air, overcame her reluctance to these rambles, and her spirits rose above the deep dejection into which they had so long been plunged, she looked as beautiful and appeared as happy as in days gone by.

Captain Netherby listened to her enthusiastic remarks and her artless sallies, with deep interest: and although he never talked to her of love, his manly heart owned for the poor, persecuted girl, a deep and fervent passion. The kind interest he expressed in her behalf, the gentlemanly way in which he endeavoured to divert her mind from its gloom, and the delicate silence which he ever maintained upon one painful subject, had endeared him to Mildred. He was to her a friend and a brother, and had not another image been more forcibly impressed upon her youthful fancy, she could have loved the gallant Richard Netherby, and have felt proud in calling him her lord.

The month of September had set in uncommonly fine, and Mildred felt unusually cheerful. Hopes and affections which had long lain dormant, were once more astir in her breast. The image of the beloved had haunted her dreams, and now waking he came blended with every thought. "He must be near," she sighed. "I shall see him again—Yes, I shall see him again!" and she sprang forth into the glorious sunshine, to meet her brother and his friend Captain Netherby, who were advancing towards the house.

"You look yourself, lovely Mildred, to-day," said Netherby, taking her hand. "What makes you so happy?"

"The beautiful world of God's own making," said Mildred. "It would be ingratitude to him to feel very miserable on such a day as this. If cruel, but well meaning friends, would leave me to myself to enjoy my life after my own fashion, I could be very happy." Tears filled her eyes as she spoke, and bending down to hide her emotion, one of those bright gems from the heart's mine, fell upon the captain's hand. He started. The colour mounted to his brow, as raising his hand to his lips, he kissed it away.

"Oh! dear Miss Rosier!" he cried. "You could make me the happiest of men."

"I wish it were in my power," she replied, with great simplicity, "for I love you very much—yes, more than my brother, for you have been kinder far to me than he has. But you know that our affections are not entirely at our own command. If I could will to love, it would be you." She raised her beautiful eyes to his face, still moist with her tears. Her charming sincerity, accompanied by that tender pleading look, which seemed so frankly to court forgiveness for having given utterance to an unpleasant truth, completely overcame the fortitude of the strong man. His lips quivered. He turned away and wept.

"You must not distress me thus," said Mildred, unconsciously pressing his hand between her own. "I did not mean to grieve you. Oh! say that you are still my friend—that you will love me in spite of my folly."

"How can I help it, Mildred? In defiance of reason, I am indeed a captive at your will."

"Who is for a walk this fine morning?" said Sydney, who had been talking with his mother at the door of the house. "Searlett will dine with us at two. It is just twelve; we shall have time for a nice stroll."

"In which direction?" said the Captain.

"The Grey Priory, and over the east cliff," cried Mildred. "It is months since I trod that path."

"Well, let us be going," returned Sydney. "You, Mildred, shall be our guide. But I have forgotten my gun. There are plenty of partridges in the young plantation. Colonel B—— has given me leave to shoot over his grounds; walk on, and I will follow with the dogs in a minute or two."

Fearful of the conversation again reverting to the same subject, Mildred pointed out the wild and beautiful scenery around her, describing to her companion, in eloquent, and lively terms, the ancient glories of the place, and contrasting it with its present poverty and desolation. They