

in the office of a banker of the city, but there was a haggard expression on his countenance, and a recklessness in his manner, that Frank thought, spoke of the gaming table and the wine cup. As Ida had married without the consent of her guardian, she had, according to the will of her father, forfeited all right to receive, till she became of age, one farthing of the interest of her fortune, which had heretofore been appropriated to her use. But Frank's penetration discerned her necessities, and from his own purse, as he could not violate the legal will, he forced upon her acceptance the whole sum then due, promising in future regularly to remit the quarterly dividends, which she consented to receive only as a loan from him, to be repaid when she attained her majority.

"After remaining a couple of days at Bourdeaux, Frank Randolph left the city and repaired to Paris, from whence he extended his travels over the whole continent. He was absent nearly four years; and during the two first we occasionally heard through him of Ida, but only that she still resided at Bourdeaux, that her husband's situation remained depressed, and their chief dependence was on the sums punctually remitted by him for her support. At the end of this time, having completed her eighteenth year, she became mistress of her paternal inheritance, and went with De Courcy to reside at Jamaica; after which we ceased to hear from her till Frank's return, and then he could only repeat to us what he had been told by the officers of a ship of war, which had touched at the island, who informed him that they had been hospitably entertained at Hope-dale, the name of her estate; where she and De Courcy were living in a style of the utmost elegance and splendour.

"Frank Randolph's first visit on regaining his native shore was to us. He and my father had frequently exchanged letters during his absence, which correspondence seemed to have established between them a confirmed intimacy, although their previous personal acquaintance had been so slight. He was greatly improved by travel, and indeed, though you smile at my partiality, Bella, had returned quite a finished gentleman, and with a mind rich and full to overflowing, with the fruits of his foreign observation. I too, since we parted, had sprung up into womanhood, and whether the change in my appearance and character were for the better or not, it seemed to surprise and interest him in no common degree. Our mutual attachment for Ida formed a bond of sympathy between us, and her fortunes furnished a never failing topic of discourse, which gave us an excuse for prolonging many a quiet walk, or extending many a morning or an evening tête-à-tête into hours, which sometimes so far interfered

with the clock-work regularity of the parsonage arrangements, as to draw a quiet reprimand from my prudent and exact mother.

"Those were golden days, Bella, as you possibly may believe, since from some recent appearances I begin to suspect yours are becoming tinged with the same mellow hue; and it might perhaps furnish you with some useful hints, were I to recount the whole history of their progress; but I will spare you this detail, and as my watch already indicates a late hour, will only say, that within six months after his return, and on the day in which I completed my seventeenth year, I became the wife of Frank Randolph.

"How often then, in the midst of our bridal joy, did we think and speak of our absent Ida; it seemed indeed as if our happiness was incomplete without her sanction and participation. We were even planning a voyage to Jamaica, when the arrival of a letter addressed in an unknown hand to Randolph, and sealed with black, put a termination to our project. It was from a clergyman of the church of England, and feelingly announced to us the death of her whom we had so fondly cherished in our hearts. He had attended her during the last days of her life, and he wrote eloquently of her faith, her patience, and her gentleness; and to soothe our grief, he bade us, if we truly loved her, to rejoice that her troubled spirit was removed from the weary bondage of sorrow to which it had been doomed. He then entered into details of which we had been ignorant—informing us, that shortly after De Courcy went to reside at Jamaica, he contracted an intimacy with a man of notoriously vicious character, who enticed him into scenes of dissipation, leading him on from one excess to another, till he brought ruin into his home, and misery to the heart of his injured wife. A criminal liaison which he at length formed with the wife of his dissolute friend, was discovered by him, and occasioned a duel between them, in which De Courcy fell, pierced through the breast by his antagonist's first fire. When the tidings of his fate reached the unhappy Ida, the cup of her utter wretchedness overflowed, and she faded away like some sweet flower, till the earth received her to its breast—to spring forth again, such was her joyful hope, to a renewed and perfect life on the glorious morning of the resurrection. A casket containing such tokens of her love as she had been able to save from the wreck of her fortune, accompanied the letter,—its contents were to be divided between Randolph and myself. To each of us also, she had written in few lines, a brief and fond farewell—and in mine there was a sad and touching allusion to the false and fatal prediction which had cast its dark shadow over her