

use her sanction—nay, she would, I am sure, think it her duty to prohibit our meeting. A separation from you I could not support; and but one mode awaits us to avert it. Fly with me, my beloved Mary, to Scotland; our marriage, once accomplished, my family must be reconciled to it—at least they cannot divide us; and your mother will be saved the blame of having aided it.”

Day after day the same reasoning was tried by the impassioned lover, and listened to with less reluctance by the too-confiding girl; and as she heard the tender reproaches he uttered, and his reiterated avowals of his increasing illness, caused, as he asserted, by the anxiety that preyed on his mind at her hesitating to elope with him, and marked the growing delicacy of his appearance, her scruples and fears vanished; and, in an evil hour, she left the happy home of her childhood, and the unsuspecting mother who idolised her. A thousand pangs shot through the heart of this innocent and hitherto dutiful daughter, as she prepared to leave the peaceful roof that had sheltered her infancy. She paused at the chamber-door of her sleeping parent, and called down blessings on her head, and was only sustained in her resolution to accompany her lover, by the recollection that she was to confer happiness—nay, life on him, and that a few days would see her return to her mother, the happy wife of Lord Mordaunt.

It is the happiness they believe they are to confer, and not that which they hope to receive, that influences the conduct of women; and many a one has fallen a victim to generous affection who could have resisted the pleadings of selfishness. At the moment of leaving her home, Mary thought only of others: her lover and mother occupied all her thoughts, and never, perhaps, did she more truly love that mother than when unconsciously planting a dagger in her heart by the step she was about to take. Never let the young and unsuspecting do evil in order that good may ensue. Mary knew that she was about to do wrong; but she was persuaded by her lover that it was the only possible means of securing their future happiness; and she yielded to the temptation.

The valet-de-chambre of Lord Mordaunt, who was in the confidence of his master, made all the necessary arrangements for the elopement; and the lovers left the village of Dawlish while the unsuspecting mother and doctor Erskine soundly slept, unthinking of the rash step the persons so dear to them were taking.

They had only pursued their route one day and night, when the rupture of a blood-vessel in the chest wrought so fearful a change in Lord Mordaunt, that he became sensible of his danger, and trembled at the idea of dying before he could bequeath his name to his adored Mary. His whole soul was now bent on fulfilling this duty; but, alas! the very anxiety that preyed on him only rendered its accomplishment more difficult. Still he proceeded, resisting all Mary's entreaties to stop to repose himself, and was within a few stages of his destined course when we first took up our tale. Arrived at —, no post-horses were to be had; and the agonies of disappointed hope were now added to the mortal pangs that shot through the frame of the dying man. He was removed from his carriage, and laid on a couch, while the agonized girl bent over him in speechless woe.

“Remember, Sainville,” murmured Mordaunt, in broken accents, “that this lady would have been my wife, had life been spared me to reach Greta. Tell my father and mother that it was I who urged, who forced her to this flight, and to look on her as their daughter.”

Here agitation overpowered his feeble frame, and he sank fainting on his pillow, from whence he never moved again, his death, in a few hours, closed his mortal sufferings. The hapless Mary stayed by him while a spark of life yet lingered; but when the hand that grasped hers relaxed its hold, she fell in a swoon, nearly as cold and rigid as the corpse beside her. For many days a violent fever rendered her insensible to the miseries of her situation. During her delirium she repeatedly called on her mother and lover to save her from some imagined enemy, who was forcing her from them; and the mistress of the inn, and the chamber-maids who assisted her, were melted into tears by the pathos of her incoherent complaints.

Intelligence of the death of Lord Mordaunt had been despatched to Mordaunt Castle, the seat of his father; and in due time, the confidential agent of his Lordship, accompanied by a London undertaker, arrived to perform the funeral obsequies.

Youth and a good constitution had enabled Mary to triumph over her malady; and, though reduced to extreme languor, reason once more resumed its empire over her brain. But with returning consciousness came the fearful, heart-rending recollection of the death scene she had witnessed; and she shrank with morbid distaste from a life that now no longer offered her a single charm. Her entreaties won from the