

which, if sought, he would not readily have found. So it was with Nevers. In a moment, when his thoughts were least occupied with such matters, Venus had lent her fatal *cestus*, and struggle, as he would, to shun its mysterious influence, it held him fast. But who is this, that, like a beleaguer, has suddenly surprised the walls of a fortress, hitherto deemed impregnable, and is now pushing the advanced columns into its very labyrinths. Here comes the secret, but not so fast. He knew her little better than in imagination, but 'twas enough. One of those dreadful casualties that so frequently occur to American steamboats, through the negligence and improper conduct of those to whom are entrusted the lives of so many of their fellow creatures, had enabled Nevers to rescue a female from a watery grave, at the imminent peril of his own life. Too proud to wait for an acknowledgement of the service he had rendered, and perhaps secretly aware of the existence of peculiar emotions, which the incident had awakened in his breast, for the lovely being he had been the means of preserving from an untimely end; he had hastened on his route without making the least enquiry as to her name, circumstances, or place of residence.

Too fatally for his peace of mind, had the poison spread, and before he was aware of it, George Nevers was irrecoverably lost;—lost in spite of his assumed indifference; lost in spite of the precaution he had taken against such a consummation. The train of new perceptions which this state of things opened out, proved no inconsiderable barrier to him in his struggle for knowledge. They mixed themselves up with his calculations—they gave form and shape to his deductions—they laughed at his baffled efforts to disencumber the pages of dull philosophy of their dazzling imagery. It is his unwonted abstraction that has given his secret to the knowing diplomatists in the court of cupid: but they were fain to be contented with vague surmises upon the details of a plot which would have baffled their utmost skill to unravel.

Love, when it takes possession of the human heart, admits of no rivalry to its dominion.—It watches every secret impression—it analyzes and binds it to its artifices—it subjugates and controuls all the operations of the understanding, and conspires against the will. Projects of ambition may be formed and prosecuted with vigour; but these are only the instruments in the hands of the master passion, by which it seeks to exalt itself. It raises its

own altar alike on the destruction and on the successful operation of the others. Lonely is the heart of him who is separated for a short interval from his brightest treasure; but inexpressibly desolate must he be who treasures up the image of his loved one, 'till every beautiful object in nature becomes impressed with her likeness,—'till the thought of her becomes a necessity,—and yet feels that the pursuit of that treasure may be as the efforts of the idiot, to grapple with his own shadow.

Chance had introduced Nevers to a stranger, their meeting had been a short one; and although the memory of that moment haunted his dreams, and was the first attendant upon his waking minutes; although it mingled with his high hopes, and disported with the previous bent of his inclinations—though it admitted of no respite; she *might* be separated from him forever!—a thousand obstacles might interpose! How did he know that she was not the wife of another? and if not, might not the service he had rendered her be returned only with gratitude; how the very word rolled like an icy avalanche to the depths of his heart!—Then, who or what was she? It mattered not to him how lowly she might be;—love looks not at the outward garb; heart communicates with heart, and not the eye with accident. But she might be high-born, and an abundance of this world's goods might be at her disposal. Here indeed might be a barrier to a fault, Nevers revolted at the idea of an alliance with a wealthy bride;—his motive might be questioned—by the world? No! he cared but little for what calumny might invent to his prejudice. *She* might suspect him of meanness—of a low-lived and ignominious disposition, striving to take advantage of an act of common humanity, in order to recommend a mercenary suit. The very length of time that had elapsed since they met, might favor such a construction of his motives. Ha! the idea was torturing; a thousand times he had resolved upon setting out with a kind of forlorn hope of discovering her, and as often his thoughts like these counteracted his resolution. Day by day, he grew more miserable, the freshness of youth was fast fading from his cheeks, and his eyes wandered in vacancy from the folios that now exposed to him in vain the jealous pages. Poor things! ye have had your day, and are now supplanted by an object more perishable, alas! than the principles ye incarnate, and more fading than the beauties ye embody. But despair not, for he may return to you again; but do not hope for the same