

ham were frequently congratulated upon their son's approaching marriage, long before they learned from Harry who, contrary to his usual openness of character, had said little on the subject, how deeply his feelings were interested. It was not, in fact, until all was arranged between him and his fair lady, that the seal seemed taken from his lips, and he poured out his full soul to his parents and Emily, believing that their joy in his success was equal to his own. Unfortunately, however, the Colonel had taken no fancy either to the young lady or her parents.

"They were regular highflyers," he said, "with nothing but their great pretensions to keep them afloat. He liked home ways and home people, not those who did nothing but wander about the world and give out that they were great, though no one knew whence their greatness was derived. The daughter might be every thing she seemed, but the mother was too artificial in her manners for him to trust to her smooth words and set speeches. Her husband was evidently under her despotic control, and he thought it a great risk to marry the daughter of a false and overbearing woman."

"Have you no opinion of your son's penetration, Colonel?" Mrs. Wyndham would reply. "Harry says that he never saw a more beautiful picture of united affection than Mr. St. Clair's family presents. His perceptions are too true about most things to admit the possibility of his being deceived in a matter of such importance as the character of those with whom he is to be so nearly allied."

"A man in love is easily deceived. I have seen more of life than you have, my dear, simply because I look at people with my own eyes, instead of through rose-coloured glasses as you do, and I never see a woman who appears so very soft and gentle that she cannot raise her voice much above a whisper, and whose every word and look betrays a studied forethought of the effect they are to produce, that I do not mistrust her sadly. Half of them are shrews, and the other half obstinate intriguers—I am much mistaken if Mrs. St. Clair is not a little of both."

"I cannot think it," said Mrs. Wyndham.—"To me there is something so fascinating in her polished elegance that I must admire her. But, even granting the mother is an artificial character, the daughter may be different; and if, as I often think, the soul imparts a portion of its loveliness to the form it animates, it must be a pure and elevated one that shines through such rare beauty as hers."

"Yet I have seen many unworthy beauties in my day," replied the Colonel smiling, "and you a few also, if my recollection serves me. But we will not dispute about Miss St. Clair, she is Harry's choice, and I will love her if I can. God grant she makes him as happy as he deserves to be; she is not like Emily though, and I rather suspect Emily fancies her as little as I do."

"Emily knows but little of her. You remember she was taken sick the very evening we first met the St. Clairs, and, except on the two days they dined here, has not seen her since. Even then she was too weak to be down stairs all the time. She thinks Julia very beautiful, and will, I know, love her as the source of Harry's happiness."

"It is but for that happiness that I wish from my soul he had not been so precipitate. He has been so dazzled by Julia St. Clair's beauty and accomplishments, that he has taken everything else for granted. He can know nothing of her real character, and he loves the creature of his own imagination, embodied in her form. So saying, the Colonel left the room, leaving his wife to the uncomfortable reflection to which his very prosaic doubts had given rise.

The four short weeks which were all that Harry's impetuosity suffered to elapse between his introduction to Julia St. Clair and his engagement with her, had been spent very sadly by Emily. Frequent headaches, accompanied by an occasional fever, to which her mental agitation had given rise, formed the excuse to her withdrawing herself altogether from society, and partially from the family circle. Perfect quiet and darkness were, she said, her best restoratives, and with truth; and as her physician did not see that much was amiss, she was allowed to try these welcome remedies. During this one month Emily seemed to have lived an age. Her affections, naturally warm, had been concentrated by the strong ties of duty and gratitude upon those who had taken her, a destitute orphan, from her forsaken home, and cherished her with such tenderness that she had since that dark hour known sorrow but in name. Towards Harry these feelings had unconsciously assumed another form—one dangerous but beautiful, and she now held stern inquisition to see how she could have so greatly erred. Had she ever thought he loved her? never for a moment, with other than fraternal love. Hers had been a free offering to his many virtues, and she felt, even now, proud that it was on one so worthy it had been bestowed. Much heroism is in the