

FANNY BURNNEY

THE WANDERER; OR,
FEMALE DIFFICULTIES
(VOLUME 2 OF 5)

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Difficulties (Volume 2 of 5)**

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The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties (Volume 2 of 5)

CHAPTER XX

Ellis hastened to the house; but her weeping eyes, and disordered state of mind, unfitted her for an immediate encounter with Elinor, and she went straight to her own chamber; where, in severe meditation upon her position, her duties, and her calls for exertion, she 'communed with her own heart.' Although unable, while involved in uncertainties, to arrange any regular plan of general conduct, conscience, that unerring guide, where consulted with sincerity, pointed out to her, that, after what had passed, the first step demanded by honour, was to quit the house, the spot, and the connexions, in which she was liable to keep alive any intercourse with Harleigh. What strikes me to be right, she internally cried, I must do; I may then have some chance for peace, ... however little for happiness!

Her troubled spirits thus appeased, she descended to inform Elinor of the result of her commission. She had received, indeed, no direct message; but Harleigh meant to desire a conference, and that desire would quiet, she hoped, and occupy the ideas of Elinor, so as to divert her from any minute investigation into the circumstances by which it had been preceded.

The door of the dressing room was locked, and she tapped at it for admission in vain; she concluded that Elinor was in her bed-chamber, to which there was no separate entrance, and tapped louder, that she might be heard; but without any better success. She remained, most uneasily, in the landing-place, till the approaching footstep of Harleigh forced her away.

Upon re-entering her own chamber, and taking up her needle-work, she found a letter in its folds.

The direction was merely To Ellis. This assured her that it was from Elinor, and she broke the seal, and read the following lines.

'All that now remains for the ill-starred Elinor, is to fly the whole odious human race. What can it offer to me but disgust and aversion? Despoiled of the only scheme in which I ever gloried, that of sacrificing in death, to the man whom I adore, the existence I vainly wished to devote to him in life; – despoiled of this – By whom despoiled? – by you! Ellis, – by you! – Yet – Oh incomprehensible! – You, refuse Albert Harleigh! – Never, never could I have believed in so senseless an apathy, but for the changed countenance which shewed the belief in it of Harleigh.

'If your rejection, Ellis, is that you may marry Lord Melbury, which alone makes its truth probable – you have done what is natural and pardonable, though heartless and mercenary; and you will offer me an opportunity to see how Harleigh – Albert Harleigh, will conduct himself when – like me! – he lives without hope.

'If, on the contrary, you have uttered that rejection, from the weak folly of dreading to witness a sudden and a noble end, to a fragile being, sighing for extinction, – on your own head fall your perjury and its consequences!

'I go hence immediately. No matter whither.

'Should I be pursued, I am aware I may soon be traced: but to what purpose? I am independent alike in person, fortune, and mind; I cannot be brought back by force, and I will not be moved by idle persuasion, or hacknied remonstrance. No!

blasted in all my worldly views, I will submit to worldly slavery no longer. My aunt, therefore, will do well not to demand one whom she cannot claim.

'Tell her this.

'Harleigh —

'But no, — Harleigh will not follow me! He would deem himself bound to me ever after, by all that men hold honourable amongst one another, if, through any voluntary measure of his own, the shadow of a censure could be cast upon Elinor.

'Oh, perfect Harleigh! I will not involve your generous delicacy — for not yours, not even yours would I be, by the foul constraint of worldly etiquette! I should disdain to owe your smallest care for me to any menace, or to any meanness.

'Let him, not, therefore, Ellis, follow me; and I here pledge myself to preserve my miserable existence, till I see him again, in defiance of every temptation to disburthen myself of its loathsome weight. By the love I bear to him, I pledge myself!

'Tell him this.

'Elinor Joddrel.'

Ellis read this letter in speechless consternation. To be the confident of so extraordinary a flight, seemed danger to her safety, while it was horror to her mind.

The two commissions with which, so inconsiderately, she was charged, how could she execute? To seek Harleigh again, she thought utterly wrong: and how deliver any message to Mrs Maple, without appearing to be an accomplice in the elopement? She could only prove her innocence by shewing the letter itself, which, in clearing her from that charge, left one equally heavy to fall upon her, of an apparently premeditated design to engage, or, as the world might deem it, inveigle, the young Lord Melbury into marriage. It was evident that upon that idea alone, rested the belief of Elinor in a faithful adherence to the promised rejection; and that the letter which she had addressed to Ellis, was but meant as a memorandum of terror for its observance.

Not long afterwards, Selina came eagerly to relate, that the dinner-bell having been rung, and the family being assembled, and the butler having repeatedly tapt at the door of sister Elinor, to hurry her; Mrs Maple, not alarmed, because accustomed to her inexactitude, had made every body dine: after which, Tomlinson was sent to ask whether sister Elinor chose to come down to the dessert; but he brought word that he could not make either her or Mrs Golding speak. Selina was then desired to enquire the reason of such strange taciturnity; but could not obtain any answer.

Mrs Maple, saying that there was no end to her vagaries, then returned to the drawing-room; concluding, from former similar instances, that, dark, late, and cold as it was, Elinor had walked out with her maid, at the very hour of dinner. But Mr Harleigh, who looked extremely uneasy, requested Selina to see if her sister were not with Miss Ellis.

To this Ellis, by being found alone, was spared any reply; and Selina skipt down stairs to coffee.

How to avoid, or how to sustain the examination which she expected to ensue, occupied the disturbed mind of Ellis, till Selina, in about two hours, returned, exclaiming, 'Sister Elinor grows odder and odder! do you know she is gone out in the chariot? She ordered it herself, without saying a word to aunt, and got in, with Golding, close to the stables! Tomlinson has just owned it to Mr Harleigh, who was grown quite frightened at her not coming home, now it's so pitch dark. Tomlinson says she went into the hall herself, and made him contrive it all. But we are no wiser still as to where she is gone.'

The distress of Ellis what course to take, increased every moment as it grew later, and as the family became more seriously alarmed. Her consciousness that there was no chance of the return of Elinor, made her feel as if culpable in not putting an end to fruitless expectation; yet how produce a letter of which every word demanded secrecy, when all avowal would be useless, since Elinor could not be forced back?

No one ascended again to her chamber till ten o'clock at night: the confusion in the house was then redoubled, and a footman came hastily up stairs to summon her to Mrs Maple.

She descended with terrour, and found Mrs Maple in the parlour, with Harleigh, Ireton, and Mrs Fenn.

In a voice of the sharpest reprimand, Mrs Maple began to interrogate her: while Harleigh, who could not endure to witness a haughty rudeness which he did not dare combat, taking the arm of Ireton, whom he could still less bear to leave a spectator to a scene of humiliation to Ellis, quitted the room.

Vain, however, was either enquiry or menace; and Mrs Maple, when she found that she could not obtain any information, though she had heard, from Mrs Fenn, that Ellis had passed the morning with her niece, declared that she would no longer keep so dangerous a pauper in the house; and ordered her to be gone with the first appearance of light.

Ellis, courtseying in silence, retired.

In re-passing through the hall, she met Harleigh and Ireton; the former only bowed to her, impeded by his companion from speaking; but Ireton, stopping her, said, 'O! I have caught you at last! I thought, on my faith, I was always to seek you where you were never to be found. If I had not wanted to do what was right, and proper, and all that, I should have met with you a hundred times; for I never desired to do something that I might just as well let alone, but opportunity offered itself directly.'

Ellis tried to pass him, and he became more serious. 'It's an age that I have wanted to see you, and to tell you how prodigiously ashamed I am of all that business. I don't know how the devil it was, but I went on, tumbling from blunder to blunder, till I got into such a bog, that I could neither stand still, nor make my way out: - '

Ellis, gratified that he would offer any sort of apology, and by no means wishing that he would make it more explicit, readily assured him, that she would think no more upon the subject; and hurried to her chamber: while Harleigh, who stood aloof, thought he observed as much of dignity as of good humour, in her flying any further explanation.

But Mrs Maple, who only meant, by her threat, to intimidate Ellis into a confession of what she knew of the absence, and of the purposes, of Elinor, was so much enraged by her calmness, that she told Mrs Fenn to follow her, with positive orders, that, unless she would own the truth, she should quit the house immediately, though it were in the dead of the night.

Violence so inhuman rather inspired than destroyed fortitude in Ellis, who quietly answered, that she would seek an asylum, till day-light, at the neighbouring farmer's.

Selina followed, and, embracing her, with many tears, vowed eternal friendship to her; and asked whether she did not think that Lady Aurora would be equally constant.

'I must hope so!' she answered, sighing, 'for what else have I to hope?'

She now made her preparations; yet decided not to depart, unless again commanded; hoping that this gust of passion would pass away, and that she might remain till the morning.

While awaiting, with much inquietude, some new order, Selina, to her great surprise, came jumping into the room, to assure her that all was well, and more than well; for that her aunt not only ceased to desire to send her away directly, but had changed her whole plan, and was foremost now in wishing her to stay.

Ellis, begging for an explanation, then heard, that Ireton had told Mrs Maple, that there was just arrived at Brighton M. Vinstreigle, a celebrated professor, who taught the harp; and of whom he should be charmed that Selina should take some lessons.

Mrs Maple answered, that it would be the height of extravagance, to send for a man of whom they knew nothing, when they had so fine a performer under their own roof. Ireton replied, that he should have mentioned that from the first, but for the objections which then seemed to be in the way of trusting Miss Ellis with such a charge: but when he again named the professor, Mrs Maple hastily

commissioned Selina to acquaint Ellis, that, to-morrow morning they were to begin a regular course of lessons together upon the harp.

Though relieved, by being spared the danger and disgrace of a nocturnal expulsion, Ellis shrunk from the project of remaining longer in a house in which Harleigh was admitted at pleasure; and over which Elinor might keep a constant watch. It was consolatory, nevertheless, to her feelings, that Ireton, hitherto her defamer, should acquiesce in this offer, which, at least, not to disoblige Mrs Maple, she would accept for the moment. To give lessons, also, to a young lady of fashion, might make her own chosen scheme, of becoming a governess in some respectable family, more practicable.

About midnight, a horseman, whom Mrs Maple had sent with enquiries to Brighthelmstone, returned, and informed her, that he could there gather no tidings; but that he had met with a friend of his own, who had told him that he had seen Miss Joddrel, in Mrs Maple's carriage, upon the Portsmouth road.

Mrs Maple, now, seeing all chance of her return, for the night, at an end, said, that if her niece had freaks of this inconsiderate and indecorous sort, she would not have the family disordered, by waiting for her any longer; and, wishing the two gentlemen good night, gave directions that all the servants should go to bed.

The next morning, during breakfast, the groom returned with the empty carriage. Miss Joddrel, he said, had made him drive her and Mrs Golding to an inn, about ten miles from Lewes, where she suddenly told him that she should pass the night; and bid him be ready for returning at eight o'clock the next morning. He obeyed her orders; but, the next morning, heard, that she had gone on, over night, in a hired chaise, towards Portsmouth; charging no one to let him know it. This was all the account that he was able to give; except that, when he had asked whether his mistress would not be angry at his staying out all night, Miss Joddrel had answered, 'O, Ellis will let her know that she must not expect me back.'

Selina, who related this, was told to fetch Ellis instantly.

Ellis descended with the severest pain, from the cruel want of reflection in Elinor, which exposed her to an examination that, though she felt herself bound to evade, it must seem inexcuseable not to satisfy.

Mrs Maple and the two gentlemen were at the breakfast-table. Harleigh would not even try to command himself to sit still, when he found that Ellis was forced to stand: and even Ireton, though he did not move, kept not his place from any intentional disrespect; for he would have thought himself completely old-fashioned, had he put himself out of his way, though for a person of the highest distinction.

'How comes it, Mistress Ellis,' said Mrs Maple, 'that you had a message for me last night, from my niece, and that you never delivered it?'

Ellis, confounded, tried vainly to offer some apology.

Mrs Maple rose still more peremptorily in her demands, mingling the haughtiest menaces with the most imperious interrogations; attacking her as an accomplice in the clandestine scheme of Elinor; and accusing her of favouring disobedience and disorder, for some sinister purposes of her own.

Ireton scrupled not to speak in her favour; and Selina eagerly echoed all that he advanced: but, Harleigh, though trembling with indignant impatience to defend her, feared, in the present state of things, that to become her advocate might rather injure than support her; and constrained himself to be silent.

A succession of categorical enquiries, forced, at length, an avowal from Ellis, that her commission had been given to her in a letter. Mrs Maple, then, in the most authoritative manner, insisted upon reading it immediately.

Against the justice of this desire there was no appeal; yet how comply with it? The secret of Harleigh, with regard to herself, was included in that of Elinor; and honour and delicacy exacted the most rigid silence from her for both. Yet the difficulty of the refusal increased, from the increased

urgency, even to fury, of Mrs Maple; till, shamed and persecuted beyond all power of resistance, she resolved upon committing the letter to the hands of Harleigh himself; who, to an interest like her own in its concealment, superadded courage and consequence for sustaining the refusal.

This, inevitably, must break into her design of avoiding him; but, hurried and harassed, she could devise no other expedient, to escape from an appearance of utter culpability to the whole house. When again, therefore, Mrs Maple, repeated, 'Will you please to let me see my niece's letter, or not?' She answered that there was a passage in it upon which Miss Joddrel had desired that Mr Harleigh might be consulted.

It would be difficult to say, whether this reference caused greater surprise to Mrs Maple or to Harleigh; but the feelings which accompanied it were as dissimilar as their characters: Mrs Maple was highly offended, that there should be any competition, between herself and any other, relative to a communication that came from her niece; while Harleigh felt an enchantment that glowed through every vein, in the prospect of some confidence. But when Mrs Maple found that all resistance was vain, and that through this channel only she could procure any information, her resentment gave way to her eagerness for hearing it, and she told Mr Harleigh to take the letter.

This was as little what he wished, as what Ellis meant: his desire was to speak with her upon the important subject open between them; and her's, was to make an apology for shewing him the letter, and to offer some explanation of a part of its contents. He approached her, however, to receive it, and she could not hold it back.

'If you will allow me,' said he, in taking it, 'to give you my plain opinion, when I have read it... Where may I have the pleasure of seeing you?'

Revived by this question, she eagerly answered, 'Wherever Mrs Maple will permit.'

Harleigh, who, in the scowl upon Mrs Maple's face, read a direction that they should remain where they were, would not wait for her to give it utterance; but, taking the hand of Ellis, with a precipitation to which she yielded from surprise, though with blushing shame, said, 'In this next room we shall be nearest to give the answer to Mrs Maple;' and led her to the adjoining apartment.

He did not dare shut the door, but he conducted her to the most distant window; and, having expressed, by his eyes, far stronger thanks for her trust than he ventured to pronounce with his voice, was beginning to read the letter; but Ellis, gently stopping him, said, 'Before you look at this, let me beg you, Sir, to believe, that the hard necessity of my strange situation, could alone have induced me to suffer you to see what is so every way unfit for your perusal. But Miss Joddrel has herself made known that she left a message with me for Mrs Maple; what right, then, have I to withhold it? Yet how – advise me, I entreat, – how can I deliver it? And – with respect to what you will find relative to Lord Melbury – I need not, I trust, mortify myself by disclaiming, or vindicating –'

He interrupted her with warmth: 'No!' he cried, 'with me you can have nothing to vindicate! Of whatever would not be perfectly right, I believe you incapable.'

Ellis thanked him expressively, and begged that he would now read the letter, and favour her with his counsel.

He complied, meaning to hurry it rapidly over, to gain time for a yet more interesting subject; but, struck, moved, and shocked by its contents, he was drawn from himself, drawn even from Ellis, to its writer. 'Unhappy Elinor!' he cried, 'this is yet more wild than I had believed you! this flight, where you can expect no pursuit! this concealment, where you can fear no persecution! But her intellects are under the controul of her feelings, – and judgment has no guide so dangerous.'

Ellis gently enquired what she must say to Mrs Maple.

He hastily put by the letter. 'Let me rather ask,' he cried, half smiling, 'what you will say to Me? – Will you not let me know something of your history, – your situation, – your family, – your name? The deepest interest occasions my demand, my inquietude. – Can it offend you?'

Ellis, trembling, looking down, and involuntarily sighing, in a faltering voice, answered, 'Have I not besought you, Sir, to spare me upon this subject? Have I not conjured you, if you value my peace, – nay, my honour! – what can I say more solemn? – to drop it for ever more?'

'Why this dreadful language?' cried Harleigh, with mingled impatience and grief: 'Can the impression of a compulsory engagement – or what other may be the mystery that it envelopes? Will you not be generous enough to relieve a perplexity that now tortures me? Is it too much for a man lost to himself for your sake, – lost he knows not how, – knows not to whom, – to be indulged with some little explanation, where, and how, he has placed all his hopes? – Is this too much to ask?'

'Too much?' repeated Ellis, with quickness: 'O no! no! Were my confidence to depend upon my sense of what I owe to your generous esteem, your noble trust in a helpless Wanderer, – known to you solely through your benevolence, – were my opinion – and my gratitude my guides, – it would be difficult, indeed, to say what enquiries you could make, that I could refuse to satisfy; – what you could ask, that I ought not to answer! but alas! –'

She hesitated: heightened blushes dyed her cheeks; and she visibly struggled to restrain herself from bursting into tears.

Touched, delighted, yet affrighted, Harleigh tenderly demanded, 'O, why resist the generous impulse, that would plead for some little frankness, in favour of one who unreservedly devotes to you his whole existence?'

Suddenly now, as if self-alarmed, checking her sensibility, she gravely cried, 'What would it avail that I should enter into any particulars of my situation, when what has so recently passed, makes all that has preceded immaterial? You have heard my promise to Miss Joddrel, – you see by this letter how direfully she meditates to watch its performance; –'

'And can you suffer the wild flights of a revolutionary enthusiast, impelled by every extravagant new system of the moment; – however you may pity her feelings, respect her purity, and make allowance for her youth, to blight every fair prospect of a rational attachment? to supersede every right? and to annihilate all consideration, all humanity, but for herself?'

'Ah no! – if you believe me ungrateful for a partiality that contends with all that appearances can offer against me, and all that circumstance can do to injure me; if you think me insensible to the honour I receive from it, you do yet less justice to yourself than to me! But here, Sir, all ends! – We must utterly separate; – you must not any where seek me; – I must avoid you every where! –'

She stopt. – The sudden shock which every feature of Harleigh exhibited at these last words, evidently and forcibly affected her; and the big tears, till now forced back, rolled unrestrained, and almost unconsciously, down her cheeks, as she suffered herself, for a moment, in silence to look at him: she was then hastily retiring; but Harleigh, surprised and revived by the sight of her emotion, exclaimed, 'O why this fatal sensibility, that captivates while it destroys? that gives fascination even to repulse?' He would have taken her hand; but, drawing back, and even shrinking from his touch, she emphatically cried, 'Remember my engagement! – my solemn promise!'

'Was it extorted?' cried he, detaining her, 'or had it your heart's approbation?'

'From whatever motive it was uttered,' answered she, looking away from him, 'it has been pronounced, and must be adhered to religiously!' She then broke from him, and escaping by a door that led to the hall, sought refuge from any further conflict by hastening to her chamber: not once, till she arrived there, recollecting that her letter was left in his hands; while the hundred pounds, which she meant to return to him, were still in her own.

CHAPTER XXI

Painfully revolving a scene which had deeply affected her, Ellis, for some time, had remained uninterrupted, when, opening her door to a gentle tap, she was startled by the sight of Harleigh. The letter of Elinor was in his hand, which he immediately presented to her, and bowing without speaking, without looking at her, instantly disappeared.

Ellis was so confounded, first by his unexpected sight, and next by his so speedily vanishing, that she lost the opportunity of returning the bank notes. For some minutes she gazed pensively down the staircase; slowly, then, she shut her door, internally uttering 'all is over: – he is gone, and will pursue me no more.' Then casting up her eyes, which filled with tears, 'may he,' she added, 'be happy!'

From this sadness she was roused, by feeling, from the thickness of the packet, that it must contain some additional paper; eagerly opening it, she found the following letter:

'I have acquainted Mrs Maple that Miss Joddrel has determined upon living, for a while, alone, and that her manner of announcing that determination, in her letter to you, is so peremptory, as to make you deem it improper to be produced. This, as a mark of personal respect, appeases her; and, upon this subject, I believe you will be tormented no more. With regard to the unfortunate secret of Elinor, I can but wish it as safe in her own discretion, as it will remain in your honour.

'For myself, I must now practise that hardest lesson to the stubborn mind of man, submission to undefined, and what appears to be unnecessary evil. I must fly from this spot, and wait, where and as I can, the restoration of Elinor to prudence and to common life. I must trust that the less she is opposed, the less tenaciously she will cling to the impracticable project, of ruling the mind and will of another, by letting loose her own. When she hears that I deny myself inhabiting the mansion which you inhabit, perhaps, relieved from the apprehension of being deceived by others, she may cease to deceive herself. She may then return to her friends, contented to exist by the general laws of established society; which, though they may be ameliorated, changed, or reformed, by experience, wisely reflecting upon the past; by observation, keenly marking the present; or by genius, creatively anticipating the future, can never be wholly reversed, without risking a re-bounce that simply restores them to their original condition.

'I depart, therefore, without one more effort to see you. I yield to the strange destiny that makes me adore in the dark; yet that blazons to my view and knowledge the rarest excellencies, the most resistless attractions: but to remain in the same house, yet scarcely ever to behold you; or, in seeing you but for a moment, to awaken a sensibility that electrifies every hope, only to inflict, with the greater severity, the shock that strikes me back to mystery and despondence – no, I will be gone! Her whom I cannot soften, I will at least forbear to persecute.

'In this retreat, my only consolation for your happiness is in the friendship, so honourable for both, that you have formed with Lady Aurora Granville; my only reliance for your safety, is in the interest of Mrs Maple to detain you under her roof, for the improvement of Selina; and my only hope for myself, is, that when Elinor becomes reasonable, you will no longer let her exclusively occupy your humanity or your feeling.

'Albert Harleigh.'

The tone of remonstrance, if not of reproach, which was blended with the serious attachment marked by Harleigh in this letter, deeply touched Ellis; who was anxiously re-perusing it, when she

received information, through Selina, that Mr Harleigh had set out for London; whence he meant to proceed to Bath, or, perhaps, to make the western tour.

The earnestness of Ireton that Selina should take some lessons upon the harp, joined to the equal earnestness of Mrs Maple, to elude the expensive professor at Brighthelmstone, confirmed the new orders that Selina should begin a course of instruction with Ellis. The mistress and the scholar were mutually well disposed, and Ellis was endeavouring to give her pupil some idea of a beautiful Sonata, when Miss Arbe, entering the house upon a morning visit, and catching the sound of a harp from the dressing-room of Selina, so touched as Selina, she knew, could not touch it, nimbly ran up stairs. Happy, then, to have surprised Miss Ellis at the instrument, she would take no denial to hearing her play.

The elegance and feeling of her performance, engaged, alike, the ready envy, and the unwilling admiration of Miss Arbe; who, a self-conceived paragon in all the fine arts, thought superior merit in a *diletanti* a species of personal affront. She had already felt as an injury to her theatrical fame, the praise which had reached her ears of Ellis as Lady Townly; and a new rivalry seemed now to menace her supremacy as chief of lady performers: but when she gathered, through Selina, who knew not even of the existence of such an art as that of holding the tongue, that they were now practising together, her supercilious air was changed into one of rapture, and she was seized with a strong desire to profit, also, from such striking talents. A profusion of compliments and civilities, ended, therefore, in an earnest invitation to cultivate so charming an acquaintance.

Mrs Maple, while this was passing, came uneasily into the room, meaning to make a sign to Ellis to glide away unnoticed. But when she found that Ellis was become the principal object with the fastidious Miss Arbe, and heard this wish of intimacy, she was utterly confounded that another person of consequence should countenance, and through her means, this itinerant Incognita. Yet to obviate the mischief by an avowal similar to that which she had been forced to make to Mrs Howel, she thought an insupportable degradation; and Miss Arbe, with the politest declarations that she should call again the next day, purposely to entitle herself to a visit in return from Miss Ellis, was already gone, before Mrs Maple had sufficiently recovered from her confusion, to devise any impediment to the proposal.

All then that occurred to her, was her usually violent, but short measure, of sending Ellis suddenly from the house, and excusing her disappearance, by asserting that her own friends had summoned her away: for Mrs Maple, like at least half the world, though delicate with respect to her character for truth in public, had palliations always ready for any breach of it, in favour of convenience, in private.

Ellis attempted not any opposition. The sufferings annexed to an asylum thus perpetually embittered by reproach and suspicion, had long made her languish to change it for almost any other; and her whole thoughts turned once more upon a journey to London, and an interview with Lady Aurora Granville.

Selina warmly protested that this separation should only augment her attachment to her favourite; by whose side she stayed, prattling, weeping, or practising the harp, till she was called away to Mrs Maple; from whom, however, she soon returned, relating, with uplifted hands, that all below was again in the utmost confusion, through a letter, just arrived, from Mrs Howel, stating the following particulars. That upon her communicating to Lord Denmeath the strange transaction, in which she must forever blush to have been, however innocently, involved, his lordship, very properly, had forbidden Lady Aurora to keep any sort of correspondence with so palpable an adventurer. But the excess of grief produced by this prohibition, had astonished and concerned both his lordship and herself: and their joint alarm had been cruelly augmented, by a letter from Mrs Greaves, the housekeeper, with intelligence that Lord Melbury had been shut up nearly two hours with this suspicious young woman, on the day that Mrs Howel had quitted Brighthelmstone; during which time, his lordship had suffered no one to come into the room, though she, Greaves, in accidentally passing

by one of the windows, saw his lordship demean himself so far as to be speaking to her upon his knees. Lord Denmeath, treating this account as an impertinent piece of scandal, requested to have it shewn to his nephew; but how unspeakable was their consternation when Lord Melbury undauntedly avowed, that the charge was true; and added, that he was glad of the opportunity thus afforded him, to declare that Miss Ellis was the most virtuous and dignified, as well as the most beautiful and amiable of her sex: she had rejected, he said, a suit which he should always take shame to himself for having made; and rejected it in a manner so impressive of real purity, that he should for ever hold it his duty to do her honour by every means in his power. The wrath expressed by Lord Denmeath, and the tears shed by Lady Aurora, during this scene, were dreadful. Lord Denmeath saw that there was no time to be lost in guarding against the most eminent danger: he desired, therefore, that the young woman might be induced, if possible, to quit the country without delay; and his lordship was willing not only to pay for her voyage back, but to give security that she should receive a very considerable sum of money, the instant that he should be assured of her safe landing upon the continent. Mrs Howel begged that Mrs Maple would endeavour to bring this plan to bear; and, at all events, not lose sight of the young person, till she should be, some how or other, secured from Lord Melbury. The rest of the letter contained injunctions, that Mrs Maple would not let this disgraceful affair transpire in the neighbourhood; with sundry scornful admonitions, that she would herself be more guarded, in future, whom she recommended to her friends.

Mrs Maple, now, peremptorily sent word to Ellis, that she must immediately make up her mind to leaving the kingdom. But Ellis, without hesitation, answered that she had no such design. Commands and menaces, though amply employed, were fruitless to obtain any change in her resolution. She was, therefore, positively ordered to seek for charity in some other house.

Ellis, no longer wishing to stay, occupied her mind almost exclusively with the thoughts of her young friends. The tender attachment shewn to her by Lady Aurora, and the honourable testimony borne her by Lord Melbury, cheered her spirits, and warmed her heart, with a trust in their regard, that, defying the inflexibility of Mrs Howel, the authority of Lord Denmeath, and the violence of Mrs Maple, filled her with soft, consolatory ideas, that sweetened her night's rest, even in her uncertainty where she should find, or where seek repose on the night that would follow.

But this brighter side of her prospects, which soothed her on its first view, lost its gay colouring upon farther examination: that Lady Aurora should be forbidden to see, forbidden to write to her, was shocking to her feelings, and blighting to her happiness: and even though the tender nature, and strong partiality, of that youthful friend, might privately yield to the pleadings of an oppressed and chosen favourite, Ellis, while glowing with the hope that the interest which she had excited would be lastingly cherished, revolted from every plan that was clandestine.

Mrs Maple, who, in common with all those whose tempers are violent in the same proportion that their judgment is feeble, had issued forth her mandates, without examining whether they could be obeyed; and had uttered her threats, without considering whether she could put them into execution; no sooner learnt, from Selina, that Ellis was tranquilly preparing to depart, than she repented the step which she had taken, and passed the night in suggesting how it might be retrieved, to spare herself the discredit, in the neighbourhood, of a breach with Mrs Howel.

The next morning, therefore, the willing Selina was instructed to hasten to Ellis, with a message from Mrs Maple, graciously permitting one more lesson upon the harp.

Destitute as Ellis felt, she would have resisted such a mockery of benevolence, but from gratitude at the pleasure which it procured to Selina.

Again, according to her promise, arrived Miss Arbe, and again hearing the sound of the harp, tript lightly up stairs to the dressing-room of Selina; where she paid her compliments immediately to Ellis, whom she courteously solicited to take an airing with her to Brighthelmstone, and thence to accompany her home for the day.

Anxious to strengthen her weak resources, by forming some new connection, Ellis was listening to this proposal, when a footman brought her a letter.

Concluding that it came from abroad, she received it with strong emotion, and evident alarm; but no sooner had she looked at the direction, than the brightest bloom glowed upon her cheeks, her eyes were suffused with tears of pleasure, and she pressed, involuntarily, to her heart, the writing of Lady Aurora Granville.

The little coronet seal, with the cypher A. G., had been observed not alone by Miss Arbe, but by Mrs Maple, who, curiously, had followed the footman into the room.

Miss Arbe, now, renewed her invitation with redoubled earnestness; and Mrs Maple felt almost insane, from excess of wrath and embarrassment, when, suddenly, and most unexpectedly, Ellis accepted the offer; gratefully embracing Selina, and taking of herself a grave, but respectful leave.

From the window Mrs Maple, then, saw this unknown Wanderer enter the carriage first.

For some time, she remained almost stupified by so unlooked for an event; and she could only quiet her conscience, for having been accessory, though so unintentionally, to procuring this favour and popularity for such an adventurer, by devoutly resolving, that no entreaties, and no representation, should ever in future, dupe her out of her own good sense, into other people's fantastical conceits of charity.

CHAPTER XXII

It was not the design of Ellis to return any more to Lewes. The gross treatment which she had experienced, and the daily menace of being dismissed, were become utterly insupportable; and she determined, in a letter from Brighthelmstone, to take a final leave of Mrs Maple.

From the high influence of Miss Arbe in what is called the polite world, she hoped that to engage her favour, would almost secure prosperity to her favourite wish and plan, of exchanging her helpless dependancy, for an honourable, however fatiguing, exertion of the talents and acquirements with which she had been endowed by her education; though nothing short of the courage of distress could have stimulated her to such an attempt.

As soon, therefore, as Miss Arbe renewed her eager invitations, Ellis expressively said, 'Are you sure, Madam, that you will not repent your goodness, when you know that I want, as well as that I value it?'

A carriage, which they just then met, stopt the chaise, and the voice of Miss Bydel called out a lamentation, that she was obliged to go home, because her brother wanted the coach; though she had earnest business at Brighthelmstone, whither she entreated Miss Arbe to convey her. Miss Arbe seemed much chagrined, both by the interruption and the intrusion, yet was so obviously going that way, that she knew not how to form an excuse; and Miss Bydel entered the chaise.

Extremely pleased by the sight of Ellis, 'What,' she cried, 'my sister actress? Why this is what I did not expect indeed! I was told you would go no where, Miss Ellis, but to Lady Aurora Granville, and the Honourable Med: Howel. Pray is it true? I should not ask if it were a secret, for I know nobody likes one's being curious; but as all the servants must know it, it's not a thing to be kept long in the dark. And I am told, too, since it's being found out that you are a young lady of fashion, that it's the high talk that you've made a conquest of Lord Melbury; and I can't but say but I should like to know if that's a report that has got any foundation. Pray will you be so kind as to tell me.'

Ellis assured her that it had not the least.

'Well, how people do like to make strange stories! One piece of information, however, I should be really glad if you would give me; and that is, whether you are come over to settle here, or only upon a visit to Mrs Maple? And whether she has the care of your fortune, as a sort of guardian; or whether it is all in your own hands?'

Ellis, disturbed by these most unseanable questions, answered, in a dejected tone, that she was not happy enough to be able, at this moment, to give any circumstantial account of herself.

Miss Arbe, who only imperfectly understood the speech which had been made as the chaise was stopt, languished to hear it explained. Privately, therefore, by arch winks, and encouraging taps, she urged on the broad questions of Miss Bydel; though she was too expert an adept in the rules, at least, of good breeding, not to hold back herself from such interrogatories, as might level her elevated fame with that of the gross and homely Miss Bydel; who to sordid friends owed a large fortune, left her late in life, but neither education nor manners, that might have taught her that its most hateful privilege is that of authorising unfeeling liberties.

They had arrived, nevertheless, within half a mile of Brighthelmstone, before any thing really explanatory had passed: Ellis, then, alarmed with reflecting that, if again dragged to Lewes, she must again have to quit it, with scarcely a chance of such another opportunity for endeavouring to bring forward her project, conquered her reluctance to opening upon her distress, and said, 'You little suspect, Miss Arbe, how deep an obligation I owe to your kindness, in carrying me to day to Brighthelmstone!'

'How so, Miss Ellis? How so, my dear?' cried Miss Bydel, before Miss Arbe could answer.

'My situation,' she continued, 'which seems so pleasant, is perhaps amongst the most painful that can be imagined. I feel myself, though in my native country, like a helpless foreigner; unknown,

unprotected, and depending solely upon the benevolence of those by whom, accidentally, I am seen, for kindness, – or even for support! –'

The amazement of the two ladies, at this declaration, was equally great, though Miss Arbe, who never spoke and never acted, but through the medium of what she believed the world would most approve to hear her say, or to see her do, had no chance of manifesting her surprise as promptly as Miss Bydel; who made her own judgment the sole arbitrator of her speech and conduct, and who immediately called out, 'Well, nobody shall ever try to persuade me I am in the wrong again! I said, the whole time, there was certainly something quite out of the common way in this young person. And it's plain I was right. For how, I said, can it be, that, first of all, a young person is brought out as nothing, and then is turned into a fine lady; when, all the time, nobody knows any thing about her? But pray tell me this one thing, child; what was the first motive of your going over the seas? And what might be the reason of your coming back again in such an untowardly sort of manner? without any money, or any one to be accountable for your character?'

Ellis made no answer. The obligations, however heavy of endurance, which led her to bear similar, and still more offensive examinations from Mrs Maple, existed not here; and the compulsion of debts of that nature, could alone strengthen the patience, or harden the feelings of a generous spirit, to sustain so rude and unfeeling an inquisition.

Miss Arbe, though anxious to understand, before she uttered even a word, what sort of footing, independently of Mrs Maple, this young person was upon in the world, failed not to remark, in her silence, a courage that unavoidably spoke in her favour.

Ellis saw, but too plainly, how little she had to expect from spontaneous pity, or liberality; and hesitated whether to plead more humbly, or to relinquish at once her plan.

'You are still, then,' resumed Miss Bydel, 'at your secret-keeping, I find, that we were told so much about at the beginning, before the discovery of your being a lady of family and fashion; which came out so, all of the sudden, at last, that I should never have believed a word of it, but for knowing Mrs Maple to be so amazing particular as to those points. –'

'And Mrs Howell!' here interrupted Miss Arbe, casting at Ellis, upon the recollection of such a confirmation of her birth and connections, a look of so much favour, that, again hoping for her aid, Ellis begged to alight at Miss Matson's, the milliner.

Miss Arbe said that she would attend her thither with pleasure. 'And I, my dear,' said Miss Bydel, 'will go in with you, too; for I want a few odd matters for myself.'

Ellis, finding how little she was understood, was forced to add: 'It is not for any purchases that I go to Miss Matson; – it is to lodge in her house, till I can find some better asylum! –'

The first amazement of the two ladies sunk into nothing, when contrasted with that which they experienced at this moment. That she should acknowledge herself to be poor, was quite enough, be her other claims to notice what they might, to excite immediate contempt in Miss Bydel: while Miss Arbe, in that point, more liberal, but, in all that she conceived to belong to fashion, a very slave, was embarrassed how to treat her, till she could gain some information how she was likely to be treated by the world: but neither of them had entertained the most distant suspicion, that she was not settled under the roof, and the patronage, of Mrs Maple. To hear, therefore, of her seeking a lodging, and wanting an asylum, presented her in so new, so altered, and so humiliated a point of view, that Miss Bydel herself was not immediately able to speak; and the two ladies stared at each other, as if reciprocally demanding how to behave.

Ellis perceived their dilemma, and again lost her hope.

'A lodging?' at length cried Miss Bydel. 'Well, I am less surprised than any body else will be, for when things have an odd beginning, I always expect them to have an odd end. But how comes it, – for that can be no secret, – that you are looking out for a lodging? I should like to know what all that means. Pray what may be the reason that Mrs Maple does not find you a lodging herself? And

who is to take care of you? Does she lend you any of her own servants? These things, at least, can be no secrets, or else I should not ask; but the servants must needs know whether they are lent or not.'

Ellis made no reply; and still Miss Arbe held back.

'Well,' resumed Miss Bydel, 'I don't like to judge any body, but certainly it is no good sign to be so close. Some things, however, must be known whether people will or not: so I hope at least I may ask, whether your friends are coming to you in your lodging? – and what you intend to do there? – and how long you think to live there? – and what is the true cause of your going there? – For there must certainly be some reason.'

Ellis, who now found that she must either answer Miss Bydel or forego her whole scheme, from the determined backwardness of Miss Arbe to take any active part in her affairs, said, 'My past history, Madam, it would be useless to hear – and impossible for me to relate: my present plan must depend upon a charitable construction of my unavoidable, indispensable silence; without which it would be madness to hope for any favour, any recommendation, that may give the smallest chance of success to my attempt.'

'And what is your attempt?' cried Miss Bydel; 'for if that's a secret too, I can't find out how you're to do it.'

'On the contrary,' she answered, 'I am well aware that I must publish, or relinquish it; and immediately I would make it known, if I dared hope that I might appear qualified for the office I wish to undertake, in the eyes of –'

She looked at Miss Arbe, but did not venture to proceed.

Miss Arbe, understanding, and feeling the compliment, yet uneasy to have it equally understood by Miss Bydel, complacently broke her silence, by saying, 'In whose eyes? – Lady Aurora Granville's?'

'Ah! Madam, – the condescending partiality of Lady Aurora, might encourage every hope of the honour of her interest and zeal; – but she is peculiarly situated; – and perhaps the weight that must be attached to a recommendation of the sort which I require –'

She was going to say, might demand more experience than her ladyship's extreme youth allowed to have yet fallen to her share; but she stopt. She was aware that she stood upon dangerous ground. The vanity of Miss Arbe was, at least, as glaring as her talents; and to celebrate even her judgment in the fine arts, though it was the pride of her life, by an insinuation that, at one-and-thirty she was not in the first budding youth of fifteen, might offend, by an implication that added years contributed to a superiority, which she wished to have considered as due to brighter genius alone.

From what was said, Miss Arbe could not be without some suspicion of what was held back; and she as little desired to hear, as Ellis could to utter, a word that might derogate from the universal elevation and distinction at which she aspired; she was perfectly ready, therefore, to accept what would flatter, and to reject what would mortify her; forgetting, in common with all vain characters, that to shrink from the truth ourselves, saves one person only from hearing our defects.

'It is true,' said Miss Arbe, smiling, 'Lady Aurora cannot be supposed to have much weight with the world, amiable as she is. The world is not very easily led; and, certainly, only by those who acquire a certain ascendance over it, by some qualifications not entirely of the most common sort. –'

'But still I don't understand,' cried Miss Bydel, 'what it is Miss Ellis means. What is it you want to be recommended about, child? – What is this attempt you talk of? – Have you got your fortune with you? – or does Mrs Maple keep it in her own hands? – or have not you got any left? – or perhaps you've had none from the beginning?'

Ellis briefly explained, that her wish was to be placed in some family, where there were children, as a governess.

Again, the two ladies were equally surprised, at the project of so steady and elaborate an undertaking; and Miss Bydel broke forth into the most abrupt enquiries, of how Mrs Maple came to agree to such a scheme; whether it were approved of by Mrs Howel; and what Ellis could teach, or do, if it took place.

Ellis, when compelled to speak, was compelled, also, to confess, that she had not mentioned her design to either of those ladies.

Miss Bydel now, stiffly drawing up, declared that she could not help taking the liberty to say, that for a young lady, who was under the care of two persons of so much consideration and fortune, to resolve upon disposing of herself, without consulting either of them, was a thing she never should countenance; and which she was sure all the world would be against.

These were alarming words for Miss Arbe, whose constant and predominant thought, was ever upon public opinion. All, too, seemed, now, at an end, that had led, or could lead, to conciliation, where there was so peculiar a rivalry in talents; joined to a superiority of beauty, visible even to her own eyes; for how, if the hours of Ellis were to be consigned to the care and improvement of young ladies, could either time or opportunity be found, to give, and in private, the musical instructions, for the hope of which alone Miss Arbe had been so earnest in her invitations, and so courteous in her manners?

Without offering, therefore, the smallest softening word to the bluff questions, or gross censures of Miss Bydel, she was silent till they entered Brighthelmstone; and then only spoke to order the postilion to stop at Miss Matson's. There arrived, the two ladies let her alight alone; Miss Bydel, with a proud nod, just uttering, 'Good bye!' and Miss Arbe, with a forced smile, saying she was happy to have been of any use to her.

Ellis remained so confounded, when thus unexpectedly abandoned, that she stood still, a few minutes, at the door, unable to answer, or even to understand, the civil inquiries of a young woman, from the shop, whether she would not come in, to give her commands. When a little recovered, she entered, and, in the meek tone of apprehension, asked whether she could again hire, for a few nights, or a week, the little room in which she had slept some time since.

Miss Matson, recollecting her voice, came now from the back parlour, most courteously rejoicing at seeing her; and disguising her surprise, that she should again enquire for so cheap and ordinary a little lodging. For Miss Matson, and her family, had learnt, from various reports, that she was the same young lady who had given so much pleasure by her performance in the Provoked Husband; and who had, since, made a long visit at the Honourable Mrs Howel's, near whose mansion was situated the shop. But, whatever might be the motive of her return, there could be none against her admission, since they knew her high connections, and since, even now, she was set down at the shop by Miss Arbe. The little room, therefore, was speedily prepared, and the first use that Ellis made of it, was to write to Selina.

She desired leave to present her thanks to Mrs Maple, for the asylum which had been afforded to her distress; without any hints at the drawbacks to its comfort; and then briefly communicated her intention, to pass the rest of the time of her suspense and difficulties, in working at her needle; unless she could find means to place herself in some respectable family, as a governess to its children. She finished her letter by the warmest acknowledgments, for the kindness which she had experienced from Selina.

The person who took this note was desired to apply to Mrs Fenn, for the ready prepared baggage of Ellis.

This, which she thought a respect demanded by decency to Mrs Maple, was her first action: she then opened, as a balm to her wounded feelings, the letter of Lady Aurora Granville; but had the cruel disappointment to find in it only these words:

'Hate me not, sweet Miss Ellis – but I am forbidden to write to you! – forbidden
to receive your letters! —
'A. G.'

Deeply hurt, and deeply offended, Ellis, now, was filled with the heaviest grief; though neither offended nor hurt by Lady Aurora, whose trembling hand-writing she kissed a thousand times; with a perfect conviction, that their sufferings were nearly reciprocal, from this terrible prohibition.

Her little baggage soon arrived, with a letter from Selina, containing a permission from Mrs Maple, that Ellis might immediately return to Lewes, lest, which Mrs Howel would never forgive, she should meet with Lord Melbury.

Ellis wrote a cold excuse, declaring her firm purpose to endeavour to depend, henceforth, upon her own exertions.

And, to strengthen this resolution, she re-read a passage in one of her letters from abroad, to which she had frequent recourse, when her spirits felt unequal to her embarrassments.

'Dans une position telle que la vôtre, –'

'In your present lonely, unprotected, unexampled situation, many and severe may be your trials; let not any of them shake your constancy, nor break your silence: while all is secret, all may be safe; by a single surmise, all may be lost. But chiefly bear in mind, what has been the principle of your education, and what I wish to be that of your conduct and character through life: That where occasion calls for female exertion, mental strength must combat bodily weakness; and intellectual vigour must supply the inherent deficiencies of personal courage; and that those, only, are fitted for the vicissitudes of human fortune, who, whether female or male, learn to suffice to themselves. Be this the motto of your story.'

CHAPTER XXIII

The hope of self-dependence, ever cheering to an upright mind, sweetened the rest of Ellis in her mean little apartment, though with no brighter prospect than that of procuring a laborious support, through the means of Miss Matson, should she fail to obtain a recommendation for the superiour office of a governess.

The decision was yet pending, when a letter from Selina charged her, in the name of Mrs Maple, to adopt, as yet, no positive measure, in order to put an end to the further circulation of wonder, that a young lady should go from under Mrs Maple's protection, to a poor little lodging, without any attendant, and avowedly in search of a maintenance: and, further, Selina was bid to add, that, if she would be manageable, she might still persist in passing for a young gentlewoman; and Mrs Maple would say that she was reduced to such straights by a bankruptcy in her family; rather than shock all the ladies who had conversed with her as Mrs Maple's guest, by telling the truth. Mrs Howel, too, with the approbation of Lord Denmeath himself, to keep her out of the way of Lord Melbury, would try to get her the place of an humble companion to some sick old lady who would take up with her reading and singing, and ask no questions.

Ellis, with utter contempt, was still perusing this letter, when she was surprised by a visit from Miss Arbe and Miss Bydel.

Miss Arbe had just been calling upon Mrs Maple, by whom she had been told the plan of Mrs Howel, and the plausible tale of its sudden necessity. Finding Ellis still under a protection so respectable, the wish of a little musical intercourse revived in Miss Arbe; and she remarked to Miss Bydel, that it would be a real charity, to see what could be done for an accomplished young woman of family, in circumstances so lamentable.

The reception they met with from Ellis was extremely cold. The careless air with which Miss Arbe had heard, without entering into her distress; and the indifference with which she had suddenly dropt the invitations that, the minute before, had been urgent nearly to persecution, had left an impression of the littleness of her character upon the mind of Ellis, that made her present civilities, though offered with a look that implied an expectation of gratitude, received with the most distant reserve. And still less was she disposed to welcome Miss Bydel, whose behaviour, upon the same occasion, had been rude as well as unfeeling.

Neither of them, however, were rebuffed, though Miss Arbe was disappointed, and Miss Bydel was amazed: but Miss Arbe had a point to carry, and would not be put from her purpose; and Miss Bydel, though she thought it but odd not to be made of more consequence, could not be hurt from a feeling which she neither possessed nor understood, – delicacy.

'So I hear, Miss Ellis, you have met with misfortunes?' Miss Bydel began: 'I am sorry for it, I assure you; though I am sure I don't know who escapes. But I want to know how it all first began. Pray, my dear, in what manner did you set out in life? A great deal of one's pity depends upon what people are used to.'

'What most concerns me for poor Miss Ellis,' said Miss Arbe, 'is her having no instrument. I can't think how she can live without one. Why don't you hire a harp, Miss Ellis?'

Ellis quietly answered, that she was not very musically inclined.

'But you must not think how you are inclined,' said Miss Bydel, 'if you are to go out for a companion, as Mrs Howel wants you to do; for I am sure I don't know who you will get to take you, if you do. I have known pretty many young women in that capacity, and not one among them ever had such a thought. How should they? People do not pay them for that.'

'I only hope,' said Miss Arbe, 'that whoever has the good fortune to obtain the society of Miss Ellis, will have a taste for music. 'Twill be a thousand shames if her fine talents should be thrown away.'

Ellis, as she suspected not her design, was much surprised by this return to fine speeches. Still, however, she sustained her own reserve, for the difficulty of devising to what the change might be owing, made her cast it upon mere caprice. To the enquiries, also, of Miss Bydel, she was equally immoveable, as they evidently sprang from coarse and general curiosity.

This distance, however, was not successful, either in stopping the questions of Miss Bydel, or the compliments of Miss Arbe. Each followed the bent of her humour, till Miss Arbe, at length, started an idea that caught the attention of Ellis: this was, that instead of becoming an humble companion, she should bring her musical acquirements into use, by giving lessons to young ladies.

Ellis readily owned that such a plan would be best adapted to her inclinations, if Mrs Howel and Mrs Maple could be prevailed upon to exert their influence in procuring her some scholars.

'But a good word or two from Miss Arbe,' said Miss Bydel, 'would do more for you, in that tuning way, than all their's put together. I should like to know how it was you got this musical turn, Miss Ellis? Were your own friends rich enough, my dear, before their bankruptcy, to give you such an education themselves? or did it all come, as one may say, from a sort of knack?'

Ellis earnestly asked whether she might hope for the powerful aid of Miss Arbe to forward such a plan?

Miss Arbe, now, resumed all her dignity, as an acknowledged judge of the fine arts, and a solicited patroness of their votaries. With smiles, therefore, of ineffable affability, she promised Ellis her protection; and glibly ran over the names of twenty or thirty families of distinction, every one of which, she said, in the choice of instructors to their children, was guided by her opinion.

'But then,' added she, with an air that now mingled authority with condescension, 'you must have a better room than this, you know. The house is well enough, and the milliner is fashionable: she is my own; but this little hole will never do: you must take the drawing room. And then you must buy immediately, or at least hire, a very fine instrument. There is a delightful one at Strode's now: one I long for myself, and then – ' patting her shoulder, 'you must dress, too, a little ... like other people, you know.'

'But how is she to do it,' said Miss Bydel, 'if she has got no money?'

Ellis, however ashamed, felt rather assisted than displeased by this plump truth; but it produced no effect upon Miss Arbe, who lightly replied, 'O, we must not be shabby. We must get things a little decent about us. A few scholars of my recommending will soon set all that to rights. Take my advice, Miss Ellis, and you won't find yourself vastly to be pitied.'

'But what have you got to begin with?' said Miss Bydel. 'How much have you in hand?'

'Nothing!' answered Ellis, precipitately: 'I lost my purse at Dover, and I have been destitute ever since! Dependant wholly upon accidental benevolence.'

Miss Bydel, now, was extremely gratified: this was the first time that she had surprized from Ellis any account of herself, and she admitted not a doubt that it would be followed by her whole history. 'That was unlucky enough,' she said; 'and pray what money might you have in it?'

Ellis, strongly affected herself, though she had not affected her auditors, by the retrospection of a misfortune which had been so eventful to her of distress, said no more; till she saw some alarm upon the countenance of Miss Arbe, at the idea of a *protégée* really penniless; and then, fearing to forfeit her patronage, she mentioned the twenty pounds which she owed to the generous kindness of Lady Aurora Granville.

Miss Arbe now smiled more complacently than ever; and Miss Bydel, straining wide open her large dull eyes, repeated, 'Twenty pounds? Good me! has Lady Aurora given you twenty pounds?'

'The money,' said Ellis, blushing, 'I hope I may one day return: the goodness surpasses all requital.'

'Well, if that is the case, we must all try to do something for you, my dear. I did not know of any body's having begun. And I am never for being the first in those sort of subscriptions; for I think them little better than picking people's pockets. Besides that I entirely disapprove bringing persons

that are poor into habits of laziness. However, if Lady Aurora has given so handsomely, one does not know how to refuse a trifle. So, I tell you what; I'll pay you a month's hire of a harp.'

Ellis, deeply colouring, begged to decline this offer; but Miss Arbe, with an air of self-approbation that said: I won't be excelled! cried, 'And I, Miss Ellis, will go to the music shop, and chuse your instrument for you myself.'

Both the ladies, now, equally elated by internal applause, resolved to set out instantly upon this errand; without regarding either refusal or objection from Ellis. Yet Miss Bydel, upon finding that neither Mrs Howel nor Mrs Maple had yet given any thing, would have retracted from her intended benefaction, had not Miss Arbe dragged her away, positively refusing to let her recant, from a conviction that no other method could be started, by which her own contribution could so cheaply be presented.

A very fine harp soon arrived, with a message from Miss Arbe, desiring that she might find Miss Ellis wholly disengaged the next morning, when she meant to come quite alone, and to settle every thing.

The total want of delicacy shewn in this transaction, made the wishes of Ellis send back the instrument to Miss Bydel, and refuse the purposed visit of Miss Arbe: but a little reflection taught her, that, in a situation so defenceless, pride must give way to prudence; and nicer feelings must submit to necessity. She sat down, therefore, to her harp, resolved diligently to practise it as a business, which might lead her to the self-dependence at which she so earnestly languished to arrive; and of which she had only learnt the just appreciation, by her helplessness to resist any species of indignity, while accepting an unearned asylum.

Cheered, therefore, again, by this view of her new plan, she received Miss Arbe, the next morning, with a gratitude the most flattering to that lady, who voluntarily renewed her assurances of protection. 'Very luckily for you,' she added, 'I shall stay here very late; for Papa says that he can't afford to begin his winter this year before May or June.'

Then, sending for a large packet of music from her carriage, she proposed trying the instrument; complacently saying, that she had chosen the very best which could be procured, though Miss Bydel had vehemently struggled to make her take a cheaper one. Miss Arbe, however, would not indulge her parsimony. 'I can't bear,' she cried, 'any thing that is mean.'

What Miss Arbe called trying the instrument, was selecting the most difficult passages, from the most difficult music which she attempted to play, and making Ellis teach her the fingering, the time, and the expression, in a lesson which lasted the whole morning.

Miss Arbe, who aspired at passing for an adept in every accomplishment, seized with great quickness whatever she began to learn; but her ambition was so universal, and her pursuits were so numerous, that one of them marred another; and while every thing was grasped at, nothing was attained. Yet the general aim passed with herself for general success; and because she had taken lessons in almost all the arts, she concluded that of all the arts she was completely mistress.

This persuasion made her come forward, in the circles to which she belonged, with a courage that she deemed to be the just attribute of superiour merit; and her family and friends, not less complaisant, and rarely less superficial, in their judgments than herself, sanctioned her claims by their applause; and spread their opinions around, till, hearing them reverberated, they believed them to be fame.

The present scheme for Ellis had another forcible consideration in its favour with Miss Arbe; a consideration not often accustomed to be treated with utter contempt, even by higher and wiser characters; the convenience of her purse. Her various accomplishments had already exhausted the scanty powers for extra-expences of her father; and it was long since she had received any instructions through the ordinary means of remuneration. But, ingenious in whatever could turn to her advantage, she contrived to learn more when she ceased to recompense her masters, than while the obligation between them and their pupil was reciprocated; for she sought no acquaintance but amongst the

scholars of the most eminent professors, whether of music or painting: her visits were always made at the moment which she knew to be dedicated to practising, or drawing; and she regularly managed, by adroit questions, seasoned with compliments, to attract the attention of the master to herself, for an explanation of the difficulties which distressed her in her private practice.

Compliments, however, were by no means the only payment that she returned for such assistance: if a benefit were in question, she had not an acquaintance upon whom she did not force tickets; if a composition were to be published, she claimed subscriptions for it from all her friends; if scholars were desired, not a parent had a child, not a guardian had a ward, whom she did not endeavour to convince, that to place his charge under such or such a professor, was the only method to draw forth his talents. She scarcely entered a house in which she had not some little scheme to effect; and seldom left it with her purpose unfulfilled.

The artists, also, were universally her humble servants; for though they could not, like the world at large, be the dupes of her unfounded pretensions to skill, they were sure, upon all occasions, to find her so active to serve and oblige them, so much more civil than those who had money, and so much more social than those who had power, that, from mingling gratitude with their personal interest, they suffered her claims to superiour knowledge to pass uncanvassed; and while they remarked that her influence supplied the place of wealth, they sought her favour, they solicited her recommendation, they dedicated to her their works. She charmed them by personal civilities; she won them by attentions to their wives, sisters, or daughters; and her zeal in return for their gratuitous services had no limit – except what might be attached to her purse.

To pay for the instructions of Ellis by patronage, was no sooner decided than effected. A young lady who had been educated abroad, who was brought forth into the world by Mrs Maple, and protected by Mrs Howel, and Lady Aurora Granville, was already an engaging object; but when she was reduced to support herself by her own talents, through the bankruptcy of her friends, she became equally interesting and respectable; and, as such, touched for her misfortunes, yet charmed to profit from her accomplishments, Lady Kendover, a leading *Diletante* in the highest circles, was the first to beg that Miss Arbe would arrange the terms, and fix a day and hour, for Miss Ellis to attend Lady Barbara Frankland, her ladyship's niece.

One pupil of this rank, thus readily offered, procured another before the day was over; and, before the evening was finished, a third.

Miss Arbe, enchanted with her success, hastened to have the pleasure of communicating it to Ellis, and of celebrating her own influence. The gratitude of Ellis was, however, by no means unruffled, when Miss Arbe insisted upon regulating the whole of her proceedings; and that with an expence which, however moderate for any other situation, was for hers alarming, if not ruinous. But Miss Arbe declared that she would not have her recommendation disgraced by any meanness: she engaged, therefore, at a high price, the best apartment in the house; she chose various articles of attire, lest Ellis should choose them, she said, too parsimoniously; and employed, in fitting her up, some trades-people who were honoured, occasionally, by working for herself. In vain Ellis represented the insufficiency of her little store for such expences. Miss Arbe impatiently begged that they might not waste their time upon such narrow considerations; and, seizing the harp, devoted the rest of the visit to a long, though unacknowledged lesson; after which, in hastily nodding an adieu, she repeated her high disdain of whatever was wanting in spirit and generosity.

Mrs Maple, with mingled choler and amazement, soon learnt the wonderful tidings, that the discarded Wanderer had hired the best drawing-room at the famous milliner's, Miss Matson, and was elegantly, though simply arrayed, and prepared and appointed to be received, in various houses of fashion, as a favoured and distinguished professor.

The fear of some ultimate responsibility, for having introduced such an imposter into high life, now urged Mrs Maple to work upon the curiosity of Mrs Ireton, to offer the unknown traveller the post of her humble companion: but Ellis retained a horror of the disposition and manners of

Mrs Ireton, that made her decidedly refuse the proposition; and the incensed Mrs Maple, and the imperious Mrs Howel, alike ashamed to proclaim what they considered as their own dupery, were alike, ultimately, reduced to leave the matter to take its course: Mrs Howel finally comforting herself, that, in case of detection, she could cast the whole disgrace upon Mrs Maple; who equally consoled herself by deciding, in that case, to throw the whole blame upon Mr Harleigh.

CHAPTER XXIV

Thus equipped, and decided, the following week opened upon Ellis, with a fair prospect of fulfilling the injunctions of her correspondent, by learning to suffice to herself. This idea animated her with a courage which, in some measure, divested her of the painful timidity, that, to the inexperienced and modest, is often subversive of the use of the very talents which it is their business and interest to display. Courage, not only upon such occasions, but upon others of infinitely higher importance, is more frequently than the looker on suspects, the effect of secret reasoning, and cool calculation of consequences, than of fearless temperament, or inborn bravery.

Her first essay exceeded her best expectations in its success; a success the more important, as failure, there, might have fastened discredit upon her whole enterprize, since her first pupil was Lady Barbara Frankland.

Lady Kendover, the aunt of that young lady, to whom Miss Arbe, for the honour of her own patronage, had adroitly dwelt upon the fortnight passed at Mrs Howel's, and, in the society of Lady Aurora Granville, by her *protégée*; received and treated her with distinguished condescension, and even flattering kindness. For though her ladyship was too high in rank, to share in the anxious tenaciousness of Mrs Howel, for manifesting the superiour judgment with which she knew how to select, and how to reject, persons qualified for her society; and though yet less liable to be controlled by the futile fears of the opinion of a neighbourhood, which awed Mrs Maple; still she was more a woman of quality than a woman of the world; and the circle in which she moved, was bounded by the hereditary habits, and imitative customs, which had always limited the proceedings of her ladyship's, in common with those of almost every other noble family, of patronizing those who had already been elevated by patronage; and of lifting higher, by peculiar favour, those who were already mounting by the favour of others. To go further, – to draw forth talents from obscurity, to honour indigent virtue, were exertions that demanded a character of a superiour species; a character that had learnt to act for himself, by thinking for himself and feeling for others.

The joy of Lady Barbara, a lively and lovely young creature, just blooming into womanhood, in becoming the pupil of Ellis, was nearly extatic. Lady Aurora Granville, with whom she was particularly connected, had written to her in such rapture of the private play, that she was wild to see the celebrated Lady Townly. And though she was not quite simple, nor quite young enough, to believe that she should literally behold that personage, her ideas were, unconsciously, so bewildered, between the representation of nature and life, or nature and life themselves, that she had a certain undefined pleasure in the meeting which perplexed, yet bewitched her imagination. She regarded it as the happiest possible event, to be brought into such close intercourse, with a person whom she delighted herself with considering as the first actress of the age. She looked at her; watched her; listened to her; and prevailed upon Lady Kendover to engage that she should every day take a lesson; during which her whole mind was directed to imitating Miss Ellis in her manner of holding the harp; in the air of her head as she turned from it to look at the musical notes; in her way of curving, straightening, or elegantly spreading her fingers upon the strings; and in the general bend of her person, upon which depended the graceful effect of the whole. Not very singular, indeed, was Lady Barbara, in regarding these as the principal points to be attained, in acquiring the accomplishment of playing upon the harp; which, because it shews beauty and grace to advantage, is often erroneously chosen for exhibiting those who have neither; as if its powers extended to bestow the charms which it only displays.

The admiration of Lady Barbara for her instructress, lost some boundary of moderation every day; and Ellis, though ashamed of such excess of partiality, felt fostered by its warmth, and returned it with sincerity. Lady Barbara, who was gaily artless, and as full of kindness as of vivacity, had the

strong recommendation of being wholly natural; a recommendation as rare in itself, as success is in its deviations.

Miss Arbe was all happy exultation, at a prosperity for which she repaid herself, without scruple, by perpetual, though private lessons; and Ellis, whose merit, while viewed with rivalry, she had sought to depreciate, she was now foremost to praise. The swellings of envy and jealousy gave way to triumph in her own discernment; and all severities of hypercriticism subsided into the gentler vanity, and more humane parade, of patronage.

Another happy circumstance signalized, also, this professional commencement of Ellis; Miss Arbe secured to her the popular favour of Sir Marmaduke Crawley, a travelled fine gentleman, just summoned from Italy, to take possession of his title and estate; and to the guardianship of two hoyden sisters, many years younger than himself. His character of a connoisseur, and admirer of *les beaux arts*; a person of so refined a conformation, as to desire to be thought rather to vegetate than to live, when removed from the genial clime of the sole region of the muses, and of taste, Italy; made his approbation as useful to her fame, as the active influence of Miss Arbe was to her fortune. This gentleman, upon hearing her perform to Lady Kendover, declared, with a look of melancholy recollection, that The Ellis was more divine than any thing that he had yet met with on this side the Alps. He requested Miss Arbe, therefore, to place his sisters under her elegant tuition, if he might hope that The Ellis could be prevailed upon to undertake two such Vandals.

Born to a considerable fortune, though with a narrow capacity, Sir Marmaduke had persuaded himself, that to make the tour of Europe, and to become a connoisseur in all the arts, was the same thing; and, as he was rich, and, therefore, able to make himself friends, civil, and therefore never addicted to make enemies, no one felt tempted, either by sincerity or severity, to undeceive him; and, as all he essentially wanted, for the character to which he thought himself elevated, was 'spirit, taste, and sense,' he uttered his opinions upon whatever he saw, or heard, without the smallest suspicion, that the assiduity with which he visited, or the wealth with which he purchased, works of art, included not every requisite for their appreciation. Yet though, from never provoking, he never encountered, that foe to the happy feelings of inborn presumption, truth, he felt sometimes embarrassed, when suddenly called upon to pronounce an opinion on any abstruse point of taste. He was always, therefore, watchful to catch hints from the dashing Miss Arbe, since to whatever she gave her fearless sanction, he saw fashion attached.

Nothing could be more different than the reception given to Ellis by Lady Kendover, and that which she experienced from the Miss Crawleys. Without any superiority to their brother in understanding, they had a decided inferiority in education and manners. They had been brought up by a fond uncle, in the country, with every false indulgence which can lead to idle ease and pleasure, for the passing moment; but which teems with that weariness, that a dearth of all rational employment nurses up for the listless and uncultured, when folly and ignorance out-live mere thoughtless merriment. Accustomed to follow, in every thing, the uncontrolled bent of their own humours, they felt fatigued by the very word decorum; and thought themselves oppressed by any representation of what was due to propriety. Their brother, on the contrary, taking the opposite extreme, had neither care nor wish but what related to the opinion of the *virtuosi*: because, though possessed of whatever could give pecuniary, he was destitute of all that could inspire mental independence.

'Oh ho! The Ellis!' cried Miss Crawley, mimicking her brother: 'you are come to be our school-mistress, are you? Quick, quick, Di; put on your dumpish face, and begin your task.'

'Be quiet, be quiet!' cried Miss Di; 'I shall like to learn of all things. The Ellis shall make me The Crawley. Come, what's to be done, The Ellis? Begin, begin!'

'And finish, finish!' cried the eldest: 'I can't bear to be long about any thing: there's nothing so fogrum.'

Their brother, now, ventured, gently, to caution them not to make use of the word fogrum, which, he assured them, was by no means received in good company.

'O, I hate good company!' cried the eldest: 'It always makes me fall asleep.'

'So do I,' cried the youngest; 'except when I take upon myself to wake it. O! that's the delight of my life! to run wild upon a set of formals, who think one brainless, only because one is not drowsy. Do you know any fogrums of that sort, brother?'

The merriment that this question, which they meant to be personal, occasioned, extremely confused Sir Marmaduke; and his evident consciousness flung them into such immoderate laughter, that the new mistress was forced to desist from all attempt at instruction, till it subsided; which was not till their brother, shrugging his shoulders, with shame and mortification, left the room.

Yawning, then, with exhausted spirits, they desired to be set to work.

Proficiency they had no chance, for they had no wish to make; but Ellis, from this time, attended them twice a-week; and Sir Marmaduke was gratified by the assurances of Miss Arbe, that all the world praised his taste, for choosing them so accomplished an instructress.

The fourth scholar that the same patronage procured for Ellis, was a little girl of eleven years of age, whose mother, Lady Arramede, the nearly ruined widow of a gamester peer, sacrificed every comfort to retain the equipage, and the establishment, that she had enjoyed during the life of her luxurious lord. Her table, except when she had company, was never quite sufficient for her family; her dress, except when she visited, was always old, mended, and out of fashion; and the education of her daughter, though destined to be of the first order, was extracted, in common with her gala dinners, and gala ornaments, from these daily savings. Ellis, therefore, from the very moderate price at which Miss Arbe, for the purpose of obliging her own various friends, had fixed her instructions, was a treasure to Lady Arramede; who had never before so completely found, what she was always indefatigably seeking, a professor not more cheap than fashionable.

On the part of the professor, the satisfaction was not quite mutual. Lady Arramede, reduced by her great expences in public, to the most miserable parsimony in private, joined, to a lofty desire of high consideration in the world, a constant alarm lest her pecuniary difficulties should be perceived. The low terms, therefore, upon which Ellis taught, though the real inducement for her being employed, urged the most arrogant reception of the young instructress, in the apprehension that she might, else, suspect the motive to her admission; and the instant that she entered the room, her little pupil was hurried to the instrument, that she might not presume to imagine it possible, that she could remain in the presence of her ladyship, even for a moment, except to be professionally occupied.

Yet was she by no means more niggardly in bestowing favour, than rapacious in seeking advantage. Her thoughts were constantly employed in forming interrogatories for obtaining musical information, by which her daughter might profit in the absence of the mistress; though she made them without troubling herself to raise her eyes, except when she did not comprehend the answer; and then, her look was of so haughty a character, that she seemed rather to be demanding satisfaction than explication.

The same address, also, accompanied her desire to hear the pieces, which her daughter began learning, performed by the mistress: she never made this request till the given hour was more than passed; and made it then rather as if she were issuing a command, for the execution of some acknowledged duty, than calling forth talents, or occupying time, upon which she could only from courtesy have any claim.

Miss Brinville, the fifth pupil of Ellis, was a celebrated beauty, who had wasted her bloom in a perpetual search of admiration; and lost her prime, without suspecting that it was gone, in vain and ambitious difficulties of choice. Yet her charms, however faded and changed, still, by candle-light, or when adroitly shaded, through a becoming skill in the arrangement of her head-dress, appeared nearly in their first lustre; and in this view it was that they were always present to herself; though,

by the world, the altered complexion, sunk eyes, and enlarged features, exhibited by day-light, or by common attire, were all, except through impertinent retrospection, that were any more noticed.

She was just arrived at Brighthelmstone, with her mother, upon a visit to an acquaintance, whom that lady had engaged to invite them, with a design of meeting Sir Lyell Sycamore, a splendid young baronet, with whom Miss Brinville had lately danced at a private ball; where, as he saw her for the first time, and saw her to every advantage which well chosen attire, animated vanity, and propitious wax-light could give, he had fallen desperately enamoured of her beauty; and had so vehemently lamented having promised to join a party to Brighthelmstone, that both the mother and the daughter concluded, that they had only to find a decent pretence for following him, to secure the prostration of his title and fortune at their feet. And though similar expectations, from gentlemen of similar birth and estate, had already, at least fifty times, been disappointed, they were just as sanguine, in the present instance, as if, new to the world, and inexperienced in its ways, they were now receiving their first lessons, upon the fallaciousness of self-appreciation: so slight is the impression made, even where our false judgment is self-detected, by wounds to our vanity! and so elastic is the re-bounce of that hope, which originates in our personal estimation of our deserts!

The young Baronet, indeed, no sooner heard of the arrival at Brighthelmstone of the fair one who had enchanted him, than, wild with rapture, he devoted all his soul to expected extacies. But when, the next morning, fine and frosty, though severely cold, he met her upon the Steyn, her complexion and her features were so different to those yet resting, in full beauty, upon his memory, that he looked at her with a surprise mingled with a species of indignation, as at a caricature of herself.

Miss Brinville, though too unconscious of her own double appearance to develope what passed in his mind, was struck and mortified by his change of manner. The bleak winds which blew sharply from the sea, giving nearly its own blue-green hue to her skin, while all that it bestowed of the carnation's more vivid glow, visited the feature which they least become, but which seems always the favourite wintry hot-bed of the ruddy tints; in completing what to the young Baronet seemed an entire metamorphosis, drove him fairly from the field. The wondering heroine was left in a consternation that usefully, however disagreeably, might have whispered to her some of those cruel truths which are always buzzing around faded beauties, – missing no ears but their own! – had she not been hurried, by her mother, into a milliner's shop, to make some preparations for a ball to which she was invited for the evening. There, again, she saw the Baronet, to whose astonished sight she appeared with all her first allurements. Again he danced with her, again was captivated; and again the next morning recovered his liberty. Yet Miss Brinville made no progress in self-perception: his changes were attributed to caprice or fickleness; and her desire grew but more urgent to fix her wavering conquest.

At the dinner at Lady Kendover's, where Miss Arbe brought forward the talents and the plan of Ellis, such a spirit was raised, to procure scholars amongst the young ladies of fashion then at Brighthelmstone; and it seemed so youthful to become a pupil, that Miss Brinville feared, if left out, she might be considered as too old to enter such lists. Yet her total ignorance of music, and a native dull distaste to all the arts, save the millinery, damped her wishes with want of resolution; till an exclamation of Sir Lyell Sycamore's, that nothing added so much grace to beauty as playing upon the harp, gave her sudden strength and energy, to beg to be set down, by Miss Arbe, as one of the first scholars for her *protégée*.

Ellis was received by her with civility, but treated with the utmost coldness. The sight of beauty at its height, forced a self-comparison of no exhilarating nature; and, much as she built upon informing Sir Lyell of her lessons, she desired nothing less than shewing him from whom they were received. To sit at the harp so as to justify the assertion of the Baronet, became her principal study; and the glass before which she tried her attitudes and motions, told her such flattering tales, that she soon began to think the harp the sweetest instrument in the world, and that to practise it was the most delicious of occupations.

Ellis was too sincere to aid this delusion. Of all her pupils, no one was so utterly hopeless as Miss Brinville, whom she found equally destitute of ear, taste, intelligence, and application. The same direction twenty times repeated, was not better understood than the first moment that it was uttered. Naturally dull, she comprehended nothing that was not familiar to her; and habitually indolent, because brought up to believe that beauty would supply every accomplishment, she had no conception of energy, and not an idea of diligence.

Ellis, whose mind was ardent, and whose integrity was incorrupt, felt an honourable anxiety to fulfil the duties of her new profession, though she had entered upon them merely from motives of distress. She was earnest, therefore, for the improvement of her pupils; and conceived the laudable ambition, to merit what she might earn, by their advancement. And though one amongst them, alone, manifested any genius; in all of them, except Miss Brinville, she saw more of carelessness, or idleness, than of positive, incapacity. But here, the darkness of all musical apprehension was so impenetrable, that not a ray of instruction could make way through it; and Ellis who, though she saw that to study her looks at the instrument was her principal object, had still imagined that to learn music came in for some share in taking lessons upon the harp, finding it utterly vain to try to make her distinguish one note from another, held her own probity called upon to avow her opinion; since she saw herself the only one who could profit from its concealment.

Gently, therefore, and in terms the most delicate that she could select, she communicated her fears to Mrs Brinville, that the talents of Miss Brinville were not of a musical cast.

Mrs Brinville, with a look that said, What infinite impertinence! declared herself extremely obliged by this sincerity; and summoned her daughter to the conference.

Miss Brinville, colouring with the deepest resentment, protested that she was never so well pleased as in hearing plain truth; but each made an inclination of her head, that intimated to Ellis that she might hasten her departure: and the first news that reached her the next morning was, that Miss Brinville had sent for a celebrated and expensive professor, then accidentally at Brighthelmstone, to give her lessons upon the harp.

Miss Arbe, from whom Ellis received this intelligence, was extremely angry with her for the strange, and what she called unheard-of measure that she had taken. 'What had you,' she cried, 'to do with their manner of wasting their money? Every one chooses to throw it away according to his own taste. If rich people have not that privilege, I don't see how they are the better for not being poor.'

The sixth scholar whom Ellis undertook, was sister to Sir Lyell Sycamore. She possessed a real genius for music, though it was so little seconded by industry, that whatever she could not perform without labour or time, she relinquished. Thus, though all she played was executed in a truly fine style, nothing being practised, nothing was finished; and though she could amuse herself, and charm her auditors, with almost every favourite passage that she heard, she could not go through a single piece; could play nothing by book; and hardly knew her notes.

Nevertheless, Ellis found her so far superiour, in musical capacity, to every other pupil that had fallen to her charge, that she conceived a strong desire to make her the fine player that her talents fitted her for becoming.

Her utmost exertions, however, and warmest wishes, were insufficient for this purpose. The genius with which Miss Sycamore was endowed for music, was unallied to any soft harmonies of temper, or of character: she was presumptuous, conceited, and gaily unfeeling. If Ellis pressed her to more attention, she hummed an air, without looking at her; if she remonstrated against her neglect, she suddenly stared at her, though without speaking. She had a haughty indifference about learning; but it was not from an indifference to excel; 'twas from a firm self-opinion, that she excelled already. If she could not deny, that Ellis executed whole pieces, in as masterly a manner as she could herself play only chosen passages, she deemed that a mere mechanical part of the art, which, as a professor, Ellis had been forced to study; and which she herself, therefore, rather held cheap than respected.

Ellis, at first, seriously lamented this wayward spirit, which wasted real talents; but all interest for her pupil soon subsided; and all regret concentrated in having such a scholar to attend; for the manners of Miss Sycamore had an excess of insolence, that rather demanded apathy than philosophy to be supported, by those who were in any degree within her power. Ellis was treated by her with a sort of sprightly defiance, that sometimes seemed to arise from gay derision; at others, from careless haughtiness. Miss Sycamore, who gave little attention to the rumours of her history, saw her but either as a Wanderer, of blighted fortune, and as such looked down upon her with contempt; or as an indigent young woman of singular beauty, and as such, with far less willingness, looked up to her with envy.

Twice a-week, also, Selina, with the connivance, though not with the avowed consent of Mrs Maple, came from Lewes, to continue her musical lessons, at the house of Lady Kendover, or of Miss Arramede.

Such was the set which the powerful influence of Miss Arbe procured for the opening campaign of Ellis; and to this set its own celebrity soon added another name. It was not, indeed, one which Miss Arbe would have deigned to put upon her list; but Ellis, who had no pride to support in her present undertaking, save the virtuous and right pride of owing independence to her own industry, as readily accepted a preferred scholar from the daughter of a common tradesman, as she had accepted the daughter of an Earl, whom she taught at Lady Kendover's.

Mr Tedman, a grocer, who had raised a very large fortune, was now at Brighthelmstone, with his only daughter and heiress, at whose desire he called at Miss Matson's, to enquire for the famous music-teacher.

Ellis, hearing that he was an elderly man, conceived what might be his business, and admitted him. Much surprised by her youthful appearance, 'Good now, my dear,' he cried, 'why to be sure it can't be you as pretends to learn young misses music? and even misses of quality, as I am told? It's more likely it's your mamma; put in case you've got one.'

When Ellis had set him right, he took five guineas from his purse, and said, 'Well, then, my dear, come to my darter, and give her as much of your tudeling as will come to this. And I think, by then, she'll be able to twiddle over them wires by herself.'

The hours of attendance being then settled, he looked smirkingly in her face, and added, 'Which of us two is to hold the stakes, you or I?' shaking the five guineas between his hands. But when she assured him that she had not the most distant desire to anticipate such an appropriation, he assumed an air of generous affluence, and assuring her, in return, that he was not afraid to trust her, counted two guineas and a half a guinea, upon the table, and said, 'So if you please, my dear, we'll split the difference.'

Ellis found the daughter yet more innately, though less obviously, vulgar; and far more unpleasant, because uncivil, than the father. In a constant struggle to hide the disproportion of her origin, and early habits, with her present pretensions to fashion, she was tormented by an incessant fear of betraying, that she was as little bred as born to the riches which she now possessed. This made her always authoritative with her domestics, or inferiours, to keep them in awe; pert with gentlemen, by way of being genteel; and rude with ladies, to shew herself their equal.

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