

Experiments;
or, The Lover from Emmui
by
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)

From
Heath's Book of Beauty, 1833
Compiled
by
Peter J. Bolton



THE BRIDE

Artist A. E. Chalon R.A. Engraver J. Cochran

EXPERIMENTS;

OR,

THE LOVER FROM ENNUI.

CECIL FORRESTER was heir to many misfortunes, being handsome, rich, high-born, and clever. His father said it was a shame such a fine fellow should be coddled—took him out to hunt, and gave him port-wine after dinner: his mother said it was a pity such a sweet boy should be spoiled—heaped cushions on his favourite sofa, and perfumed for him a cambric handkerchief with *l'esprit de mille fleurs*. His father died—his mother was inconsolable for six months, and then married again. Cecil was sent to Eton, where, instead of others indulging him, he indulged himself.

His education was finished by terms at college and seasons in London; and his twenty-second year found him without a pleasure, and without a guinea. The next spring he lived on *ennui* and credit. He

disliked trouble, because he never took it; and he said things and people were tiresome and bores, till he firmly believed it. His feelings were never called forth, his talents never exercised; his natural superiority only served to make him discontented. He saw the waste of his life, but he lacked motive for change: his early habits were those of indolence; and being neither poor nor vain, he had no stimulus to alter them. He did a great many foolish things, regretted them, and did them over again.

One day, after driving in the Park, and wondering why so many people drove there, he turned homewards to dress for a late dinner at the Clarendon. Giving his boy the reins, he resigned himself to meditation,—how unpleasant it was for the pedestrians of Piccadilly to hurry through the mud!—when he was interrupted by the boy's, "Sir, if you please," said in a tone of self-exertion, as if a great deal of mental energy had been collected for its utterance; then, in a deprecatory whisper, "you won't collar me and throw me out of the cab before I've said half, will you?"

"No, I will not," said Cecil.

To make our story shorter than the miniature groom's, he learnt that his own property in himself was in danger; and that, if the patriot's definition of liberty be true—"it is like the air we breathe, without it we die"—his life was near its termination. A writ was issued against him; and, thanks to a *douceur* to his valet, two professional

gentlemen, as he left his toilet, would deprive his friends at the Clarendon of his company.

“ I wish I had spoken to my uncle sooner ; but, hang it ! it is so unpleasant speaking : I’ll write.”

Forrester was just now in that part of Piccadilly where the White Horse of our Saxon ancestors has degenerated from the banner of a sea-king to the sign of a cellar for taking places and parcels. Still, even as of yore, it hangs over a most migratory multitude. “ For Putney, ma’am ? ” “ For Richmond, sir ? ” One coachman snatches up a child for Turnham Green, while another pops its mamma off to Camberwell. On one side, lemons are selling for a shilling a dozen ; on the other, oranges for sixpence. One man blows a horn in your ear, and offers you the Standard ; another exerts his lungs, and shews you the Courier. Pencils are to be had for a penny ; and penknives, with from three to six blades each, for eighteen pence a-dozen. A fellow with a trunk turns its corner on your temples ; another deposits a box, with the grocery of a family — sugar, soap, candles, and all — on your toes. A gigantic gentleman nearly knocks you down in his hurry ; and an elderly Jew slips past you so neatly, that you tumble over him before you are aware. Every body is always too late, and therefore every body is in a bustle. Two policemen keep the peace ; and half-a-dozen individuals, whose notions on the law of property are at variance with established principles or prejudices, attend for the purpose of

breaking it. Add to these some females with shawls and sharp elbows; and pattens, whose iron rings are for the benefit of foot-passengers. Such is the White Horse Cellar, and the pavement from Dover Street to Albemarle Street.

Several coaches seemed to be just setting off.

“I will leave London at once,” said Forrester. “Do you drive home—you know nothing about me. You are a fine little fellow; I shall not forget you.”

So saying, he threw him two or three sovereigns, and got into the first coach. The boy took the money, drove the cabriolet to the stable, and ate and drank himself into a fever, out of which his mother had to nurse him.

Cecil opened his eyes on the grey sea-mist of a Brighton morning. Summer and Brighton!—the vicinity was dangerous. In all probability his tailor would be taking twopenny worth of pleasure on the pier; and if, like John Gilpin’s wife, “though on pleasure he was bent,” he should also “have a frugal mind,” and keep an eye to business, that eye would inevitably fall on him. However, a temporary stay was necessary, for all the personal property he possessed was a handkerchief. Money supplies every want, and he had drawn his last from the banker’s the day before. He did not mean to have stirred from his room, but seeing an acquaintance from the window, he resolved to ask him to dinner.

He knew Ravensdale was in love, therefore stu-

pid; still, any company was better than his own. They dined together; and, as a companion is generally the straw that decides an idle man, he set out with him that evening for Hastings. There Mr. Ravensdale expected to meet "the beauteous arbiter who held his fate;" but some slight cause of delay had prevented, and would prevent for a short time, her family's arrival. Cecil quite envied the lover his disappointment — it so entirely occupied him.

A week passed away while he was making up his mind what he should say to his uncle, whose heir he was, and whose kindness he believed would be very likely to assist him; but long before the week was finished, he was quite convinced that Hastings was the most tiresome place on the whole sea-coast. *Oh, la peine forte et dure* of idleness! Blessed is the banker's clerk, who on a November morning takes his nine-o'clock walk to business under a green umbrella, digesting the memory of his buttered roll and the anticipation of his desk! Blessed is the fag of fashions and fancies, who unrolls ribands from morn till night at Dyde's and Scribe's! Blessed is Mr. Martin, when, transgressing his own act, he urges along the heavy animal on which he perambulates in pursuit of an overladen donkey! Blessed were all these in comparison with Cecil Forrester, "lord of himself, that heritage of wo!"

It was a wet morning, and he loitered at the breakfast-table, though he had long finished both

meal and appetite. At length he rose, took two or three turns up and down the room, opened a book, then threw it aside:—(by the by, parents have a great deal to answer for who do not early give their children a taste for reading—novels.) He next approached the window, and proposed to his companion, who was letter-writing, to bet on the progress of two rain-drops. Not having been heard, he proceeded with his cane to trace his name on the damp glass; and at last, in desperation, exclaimed, “How devilish lucky you are, Ravensdale, to be in love! Nothing like love-letters for filling up a rainy morning. A mistress gives a man such an interest in himself! You cannot run your fingers through your hair, without a vision of the locket wherein one of your curls reposes on the fairest neck in the world. An east-wind only conjures up a host of “sweet anxieties;” and if the worst comes to the worst, you can sit down and write sonnets to your inamorata’s eyebrow. I have made up my mind—I will try and fall in love. Well, who is there here?”

“Lady de Morne, doing dolorous and disconsolate—only walks in her garden; to be sure, it overlooks the high-road.”

“What, a widow! warm or cold, which you will, from the kiss of a dead man! I should taste clay upon her lips!”

“Miss Acton, then, the heiress—*utile et dulce*.”

“No; she belongs to the romantic school, and

expects you to rise in the morning to bring her violets with the dew on them; takes country rambles, which would spoil my complexion; and moonlight walks, which would give me cold. Charles Ellis told me that, in a fit of despair occasioned by a run of ill-luck at *écarté*, he entered into her service for three weeks. He, however, soon found himself feverish — lost his appetite — had a hectic cough — and the fourth week retired on a consumption. I do not feel equal to the exertion.”

“ Mrs. Ellerby’s two daughters.”

“ Yes, and never know which is which! I hate people cut out by a pattern. Besides, the only papers in the family are pedigrees; and I am not rich enough to keep a cook, a confectioner, and a wife. Moreover, Mrs. Ellerby, being what is called serious, would expect my attentions and intentions to be as serious as every thing else in the house. No; I want to find some unsophisticated being whose hair curls naturally.”

“ Now, in pity spare me the description of that never-to-be-discovered perfection, an ideal mistress! Be sure you will fall in love with the very opposite.”

“ I don’t care, so long as I could fall in love. But the rain is over: you will not ride, will you?”

Cecil Forrester rode along the beach by himself. Most earnestly did he wish that some of the young ladies who were sketching “that beautiful effect of light on the grey rocks,” would tumble into the water.

He might have rushed to the rescue, and so lost his heart in the most approved fashion. Gradually he turned into the very road which he had taken every day, only because he had taken it first. There, as usual, he overtook the same respectable brown coat and horse, and their no less respectable proprietor, whom he regularly encountered. A sudden shower drove them simultaneously under an oak.

English people, as a foreign traveller mentions in his diary, never speak, excepting in cases of fire or murder, unless they are introduced. The old oak did this kind office for the riders.

“The country wanted rain, sir,” observed the elderly gentleman.

Forrester felt that his companion had violated every rule of civilised society in thus addressing him; still, he was good-natured, and, moreover, was tired of himself. He therefore replied — “And we are likely to have enough now.”

“Ay, ay; it never rains but it pours. I must say I have great faith in Moore’s Almanac; it said we should have rain a week ago.”

It is needless to detail how acquaintance deepened into intimacy. Silence maketh many friends. The old gentleman took quite a fancy to Cecil, pronounced him such a steady young man, and asked him to dinner.

Forrester went; his host had two daughters — one rather pretty and pensive, the other very pretty and lively.

The next week was quite endurable as to length : Cecil copied verses into the eldest Miss Temple's album, and held some green silk for the younger to wind.

The Saturday following his introduction it was a beautiful moonlight evening, and Miss Temple was walking up and down the lawn ; she really looked very well, and Cecil was about to join her, when a light step, close beside him, announced her sister.

“ ‘ The moon is bright on Helle's wave,
As on that night of stormy water,
When Love, who sent, forgot to save
The young, the beautiful, the brave.’

Even as Love forgot the lover, I have forgot the poet—not a line more can I remember ; but I would wager the purse whose green silk I am knitting, and which you helped me to wind, against its weight in green grass, that those very lines are in Mary's head at this minute.”

“ Why those lines especially ?”

“ Oh, dear ! now, cannot you guess ?—why, every body knows !”

“ But as I am not every body, I shall not know till you tell me.”

“ Oh, but really I shan't tell you !”

“ Oh, but really you must !”

“ To be sure, there is not a neighbour but is aware that she is engaged to such an interesting young man now in Greece. But, dear, dear ! you

must have noticed how she coloured up when you talked about a turban's suiting her style of face. And did you observe my father's laugh at dinner, to-day, when he asked her if she liked Turkey?"

"And so Miss Temple has got a lover — and I need not ask if you have one also."

"Not I indeed — dear, if I had a lover one week, I should forget him the next!"

Somehow or other the dialogue ended in one or two pretty speeches — the last things in the world to particularise. And Forrester went home quite convinced that Elizabeth was far the prettiest of the two, and bound by promise to accompany them the next night to a fancy ball in the neighbourhood.

Now, a fancy ball is bad enough in London, where milliners are many, and where theatres have costumes that may be borrowed or copied; but in the country, where people are left to their own devices — truly to them may be applied the old poet's account of murderers, "their fancies are all frightful." Miss Temple, we need scarcely observe, wore a turban, and looked as Oriental, at least as un-English, as possible. Elizabeth preferred going back upon the taste of her grandmothers; and when Cecil first saw her standing in the window, with the loose hanging sleeves of former days, and floating draperies of an antique striped silk — her pretty arms just bare to the elbow, and her fair hair in half-dishevelled curls, — he decided, that if you

are very young and pretty, extravagance in costume carries its own excuse.

To the dance they went: the dancing was bad, the music worse, and instead of ice, sago was handed round to keep the young people from taking cold. Yet Cecil had passed worse evenings. We talk of unsophisticated nature—I should like to know where it is to be found. Elizabeth Temple's hair did curl naturally—she made her own dresses—and for accomplishments, played on her grandmother's spinnet by ear, knitted purses, and took the house-keeping alternate weeks with her sister;—yet had she talents for flirtation at least equal to those of any young lady whose dress and accomplishments are the perfection of milliners and May Fair. Cecil was her partner the most of the evening; and, by a few ingenious and invidious parallels, implied not expressed, between him and the other cavaliers,—that preference of attention, the best of feminine flattery,—and a deference to his opinion, nicely blended with a self-consciousness of prettiness, Elizabeth contrived to keep him rather pleasantly awake. Mr. Temple's house lay in his way home; and though he had already ate supper enough for six months, his friends would make him go in for another. On his departure, Elizabeth gave him some trifling commission at Hastings; and while she was writing it down, Forrester, with that universal habit of the idle, took up whatever happened to be near, in the laudable intention of

twisting it to pieces. It was the little green silk purse, and he looked on it with a remembrance of the slender fingers he had seen employed in its making. Could he be mistaken? no, he saw the letters distinctly, C. F. worked in light brown hair—his own initials; and he now recollected that Miss Temple had asked him the other morning what was his Christian name; on hearing which, she made the usual remark of young ladies in such cases, “Dear, what a beautiful name!”

Elizabeth, turning round at this minute, saw the purse in his hand, and also which of the stitches had fixed his attention. Blushing even deeper than the occasion required, she said in a low but hurried voice, “I really cannot have my work spoilt; give me the purse, Mr. Forrester.”

“Never!” said Cecil, in what was for him a very energetic tone.

“Oh, but I must and will have it!” making an attempt to snatch it from him—to which his only answer was to catch her hand and kiss it.

“Elizabeth, my dear, Mr. Forrester must be tired; do not detain him with your foolish commissions,” said her father, who advanced, and himself accompanied his guest to the hall, taking leave of him with a mysterious look of mingled cordiality and compassion.

The young gentleman rode home, too tired for any thing but sleep; and when he arose the next morning, it was with a conviction that light brown

hair was "an excellent thing in a woman." True, in a fit of absence, while debating whether or not he should write to his uncle before he rode out, he dropped the purse into the fire; nevertheless his vexation at the incident was sufficiently flattering to its maker. As soon as he had decided that he would put off writing till the next day, he ordered his horse and rode to Mr. Temple's. In the hall he caught a flying glance of Elizabeth, whose fair face was evidently much disfigured with recent crying. Lord Byron says,

" So sweet the tear in beauty's eye,
Love half regrets to kiss it dry."

Now we, on the contrary, hold that a good fit of crying would, for the time, spoil any beauty in the world.

Cecil entered the parlour somewhat abruptly; Mrs. Temple was saying, "I do so pity the poor young man." On what account the "poor young man" was pitied, Forrester's entrance prevented his learning, for she instantly broke off her speech in great confusion.

Mr. Temple paced up and down the room, as if he thought exercise a great relief to anger. Both received their visiter with even more than their usual kindness, but with obvious and painful embarrassment. Husband and wife interchanged looks when the topic of the weather was exhausted, each seemingly expecting the other to speak. A few

minutes passed in silence — at length Mr. Temple began.

“ I am truly sorry — ”

“ My dear,” interrupted his wife.

“ I am sure you will be very glad — ”

“ Nay,” again rejoined the lady, “ it is presuming too much on Mr. Forrester’s kindness to suppose that he will take an interest in our affairs.”

Mr. Forrester hastened to assure her he took the very warmest.

“ My daughter Elizabeth,” said the old gentleman.

“ Good heavens ! ” thought Cecil, “ he is not going to ask me what my intentions are ! I am sure I can’t tell him.”

“ My daughter Elizabeth,” — how the words were bolted out ! — “ is going to be married.”

“ My dear, how could you be so abrupt ? ” ejaculated the lady.

As if to give his visiter time to recover the shock, Mr. Temple went on rapidly, “ To a son of a very old friend of mine — Charles Forsyth — you saw him last night — very fine young man ; he made her an offer this very morning, before breakfast.”

“ My love, you need not be so particular.”

Forrester, who, to tell the truth, had no stronger feeling on the subject than surprise — perhaps a little mortification — now offered his congratulations. Not being very desirous of encountering the fair fabricator of the deceiving initials, the betrothed of

Mr. Charles Forsyth, he took the first opportunity of making his bow and his exit.

“Poor young man, how well he has behaved!” said the mother.

“I knew he would’nt take it much to heart,” answered the father.

As Cecil passed through the hall, he heard Elizabeth’s voice tuned to rather a petulant key.

“In spite of all mamma says about feeling, and papa about principle, and you with your devoted affection to one object, I can’t see the great harm of a little innocent flirtation — Mr. Forrester won’t break his heart for passing an evening more pleasantly than he would otherwise have done; and if I had not flirted with him, Charles Forsyth, though he is the son of my father’s old friend, would not have made his offer these six months — and one cannot wait for ever, you know.”

“Very true,” muttered Cecil Forrester, as the hall-door was closed after him. That evening he wrote to his uncle; and passed the intermediate time in cutting his name on the table, and wondering what would be the reply. He received an answer by return of post — angry and yet kind, requesting his immediate presence in town. He made a farewell call at Mr. Temple’s — saw Elizabeth and Mr. Charles Forsyth in an arbour at the end of the garden, making love — thought they would soon be very tired — and bade the rest of the family good-bye, who thought he looked pale. Mrs. Temple for

a fortnight afterwards read every article headed "Interesting Suicide," in the newspapers; and though they were all "interesting," they did not interest her. Cecil arrived at his uncle's, who commenced the conversation by declaring he would cut him off with a shilling, and ended by paying his debts and making him an allowance. The next week saw two different announcements in the Morning Post — one was the marriage of Elizabeth Temple to Charles Forsyth, Esq.; the other the departure of Mr. Cecil Forrester for Naples.

A friend had offered to take him thither in his yacht, and for that reason only he had gone. Of course he ascended Vesuvius — visited churches, pictures, statues, &c.; but, alas! these are tastes which require cultivation — and at present they appeared to Cecil in the light of duties. Not speaking the language of the country, he was excluded from all enjoyment of Italian society, and English he had entered an inward protest against. Two friends had refused to cash a draft for him: one because he could not, the other because he would not — one from inability, having no money to spare; the other from principle, as he made it a rule never to lend. A lady, with whom he had been quite *l'ami de famille*, with four pretty daughters, had actually avoided seeing him in the Park before it was known that his uncle intended arranging his affairs. Cecil was therefore persuaded of the heartlessness of artificial society. Still, he had no innocent beliefs

in rural unsophistication — Elizabeth Temple had cured him of any such vain fancies: he retained a predilection for the natural — only he decided that it was not to be discovered in any civilised country. He used to sit on the sea-shore, and spend the evening poring over some volumes of Lord Byron he had found by accident, and in throwing pebbles into the sea. A beautiful dream of a Circassian had been floating on his mind, when the arrival of the Dey of Algiers with his harem at Naples changed his reverie to absolute reality.

One fine morning, a whole array of palanquins, the forms within them shrouded from human eye, passed him on his ride — the next day the same — the third the curtains of one slightly moved, a sprig of jasmine was thrown out, and the day following one of myrtle. That night Cecil read Lord Byron — the Giaour and the Corsair were only interrupted by Lalla Rookh. He went to bed, and dreamt of the maids

“ Who blushed behind the gallery’s silken shades.”

The next day he began to study Arabic, and to endeavour to find some means of conversing with this unknown Hourî. To be sure, there were curtains, locks, bolts, bars, and cimeters; still,

“ Love will find its way
Through paths where wolves would fear to prey;
And if it dares enough, ’twere hard
If passion met not some reward:”

and Cecil succeeded in establishing an intercourse with this Haidee of his fancy, by means of a petty officer in the Dey's retinue, who contrived to bribe one of the slaves in immediate attendance on the harem, from whom he learnt that she was the last and loveliest purchase of his lord. The progress of love-affairs is usually very rapid, and this was no exception to the general rule. A plan of escape was soon organised; her especial guardian agreed to facilitate her remaining after dusk in the garden, which was bounded by a river; a few planks would form an easy communication with the water; a boat might be stationed there; and four good rowers would convey them in half an hour to a little villa, which Cecil, in a week's whim for solitude, had rented: once there, no trace would be left of their flight, and no fear remain of discovery. The night fixed on found them punctual to their appointment — so were the slave and the beautiful Georgian. The zeal of Sidi Mustapha, the first agent, was quite wonderful; he sprang up the boards to aid the lady's descent, and would scarcely allow Cecil to give himself any trouble in the matter, till it was evident she could not get down without help from both. After some effort, she and her drapery — the quantity of which seemed enormous — were deposited in the boat. They arrived in silence and safety at the villa: Sidi and Forrester supported their prize into the saloon, fear seeming to have deprived her of the power of motion; and the Algerine hastened

to discharge the boatmen with all possible caution. Every thing had been prepared ; the table was covered with the richest sweetmeats, the rarest perfumes, the most aromatic coffee. Cecil's impatience was now at its height.

“ Gulnare !” — but she replied not : — “ dear Gulnare !”

Suddenly he recollected that she might perhaps not understand Arabic — at all events, his Arabic. Still, till his interpreter returned, it would be but civil to help her off with the large blue veil, or mantle, which entirely covered her. Politely proffering his assistance, he removed her veil, and flung it on a chair near.

The scream which followed this act astonished him far less than the discovery to which it led. The lovely Georgian was so fat, that it was with the greatest difficulty she could stand ; and an exquisitely tattooed wreath of hyacinths, of a fine blue, began at her chin, meandered over her cheeks, and covered her forehead.

“ Oh !” ejaculated Cecil, “ if I had but profited by my reading ! Why did I not sooner remember the traveller I studied in the days of my youth, who said that in the East a beauty was a load for a camel !”

At this moment Mustapha re-entered the saloon.

“ O Allah, how beautiful ! By the head of the Prophet, she is a rose — a full moon !”

Cecil sprang forward, with the true Englishman's

impulse, to knock him down. Ill-timed admiration is enough to enrage a saint. The shrill cries of the lady, however, diverted his attention.

“ Unless you wish me to be deafened outright, do learn the cause of her horrible clamour.”

“ Your highness has taken off her veil.”

“ Which, for my own sake, I shall return as speedily as possible.”

Without a moment's delay he restored the screen and quiet at the same time; and with the aid of Mustapha supported the fair slave to a pile of crimson satin cushions, which had been collected for her especial use.

“ And now, in the name of the devil, what shall I do with her ?”

Sidi seemed a little surprised at the question, and forthwith began a string of Arabic verses about this star of the morning, this pearl of the world, this rose of a hundred leaves, which the stranger was fortunate enough to possess. Well, to make the best of a bad bargain, and short of a long story, he married the Georgian to Sidi Mustapha.

After all, Englishmen *are* patriotic with partridges before their eyes; and this little adventure gave Cecil an excuse for returning to England before September. What is the reason that we find it so satisfactory to make excuses to ourselves — the only persons in the world to whom they must be altogether needless ?

It was the last week in August when he reached

the Abbey, his uncle's seat. How advantageously did the luxurious foliage of the thickly leaved woods, as yet untouched by one tint of autumn, and the bright green grass of the fields, contrast with the parched and sultry aspect of the southern summer he had left behind! It was long — in youth, every thing seems long — since he had felt a sensation of pleasure so keen as he experienced when the tall oaks of the avenue closed over his head. The rooks were gathering to their rest, as noisily as children; but the old and familiar are ever soothing sounds. In the distance he could see the slim and mottled deer sauntering lazily along in the full enjoyment of security; and the last red flush of evening was reflected in a large piece of water, which glittered through the dense branches.

At length he arrived in the court, where half-a-dozen gray-headed serving-men came out to meet "Master Cecil," as they persisted in calling him. It is very agreeable to have people glad to see you, even if there be no better reason for their joy than that they knew you as a child. A spaniel now put its nose into his hand: but the dog's memory was more faithful than that of its master; for the visitor had some difficulty in recognising, in the heavy and feeble creature that claimed his notice, the once slight and agile partner of his boyish amusements.

"My poor Dido! can this be you?"

"All my young mistress's care," said one of the servants.

At this moment the young mistress herself appeared, and Cecil found that he had forgotten her as much as his dog. He had left her a pale, sickly, even plain child : she had sprung up into a bright, blushing, and most lovely girl. Her flaxen hair had darkened into a rich chestnut ; and the only trace of "little Edith" was in the large blue eyes, which remained the same. Cecil was quite surprised that she so instantly remembered him ; but five years after twenty do not make the difference they do before that age.

Sir Hugh was as glad to see his nephew as a gentleman of the old school always is on the stage ; and in half an hour the trio were comfortably situated in the library — some dinner ordered for Cecil — an extra bottle of port for the old gentleman — and Edith, seated on a low stool at her father's knee, was quite delighted when the conversation went back to their childish sports, and what a pet the poor little delicate child used to be of her cousin's.

The next month flew away imperceptibly. Cecil listened patiently to the politics of the Morning Post — for Edith read them aloud to her father. He also found that he could read at his young hostess's work-table ; then he was so very useful in the flower-garden, which was especially hers ; there were, besides, visits to the gold and silver pheasants, long rides over the heath, long walks through the forest, and long evenings, when Sir Hugh sat by the fire-side and slept, and Edith sung sweet old

ballads to her harp. The result of all this was inevitable: had it been in a melodrame, the young people could not have fallen more desperately in love. Let others talk of the miseries of the tender passion, Cecil was eloquent on its comforts: he had never been so occupied or so amused before.

On the 1st of October, a bright clear morning, when the few flowers that still linger on sunny terrace or southern nook are in all that glow of gorgeous colouring which so peculiarly belongs to autumn, the young lady of the Abbey stepped out on the balustrade to pluck the last buds of the Provence rose. A few late geraniums and myrtles were yet beautiful and green; but suddenly Edith turned and gathered from a luxuriant plant its only cluster of orange flowers. They suited well her array, for Edith was that day garbed as a bride. The glossy brown hair—that golden brown which shines on the pheasant's wing—fell in large curls from her white wreath, half-hidden by the long veil; the white satin dress had no ornament—not a gem marred its rich simplicity. She leant pensively on a corner of the marble pilaster: for she stood now on the threshold of youth; she was about to put away childish things, to take upon her higher duties; and her destiny was given—how utterly!—into the hands of another. Already the shadow of love deepened the seriousness of that graceful brow. Still, she was only leaving the home of her childhood for a time, not as the young bride often leaves that home—for

ever. To wed with Cecil was but giving Sir Hugh another child.

“Come, Edith mine!” said a sweet voice at her side; and the lover led her to her father.

In another half-hour the bells were ringing cheerfully on the air; and during the many years that the old Abbey was gladdened with their mutual happiness, Cecil never felt inclined to go to Hastings from *ennui*, or to Naples as an experiment; but found ample employment and content around his own home, and by his own hearth.