

**SIMPLE TALES; IN
FOUR
VOLUMES, VOL. IV**

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Simple tales; In four volumes, Vol. IV by Amelia Alderson Opie

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AMELIA ALDERSON OPIE

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SIMPLE TALES:

BY

MRS. OPIE.

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1815.

SIMPLE TALES.

THE UNCLE AND NEPHEW.

AT the early age of two-and-twenty, Charles Clermont, by the death of his father, became possessed of an estate of 2,000*l.* per annum. Unfortunately, his father's habits had been so parsimonious, and his ideas on the subject of expenditure so narrow, that his son had never been allowed by him an income adequate to the common wants of a gentleman. Therefore, when he saw himself possessor of a large estate, and a considerable sum of ready money besides, the sudden change from poverty to wealth, had the pernicious effect of making him deem his riches so great as to be inexhaustible; and his heart and

his hand became as open, as his predecessor's had been the contrary.

Generosity and fine feeling marked indeed all his actions: but he wanted judgement; he wanted reflection. Each quick and benevolent impulse he eagerly obeyed, nor waited to consider how far the meditated action was, or was not, pregnant with future good or evil.

But of some of his benevolent impulses he had no reason to repent. The impulse which led him to introduce himself to an oppressed orphan, the daughter of a clergyman, in order that he might offer her his purse and interest, to enable her to defend an unjust suit instituted against her by a man whose addresses she had rejected, was the means of making him the husband of one of the best of women. For the orphan, whom he first visited from pity, he revisited from love; and when she modestly reminded him of the difference of their fortunes, and that his friends and family would disapprove so

disproportionate an union, he wisely observed, that he considered money not as happiness, but as the *means* of happiness; that he had money, she had none; but then she had beauty, sense, and virtue—qualities, the possession of which was, exhibited as they appeared in her person, essential to his felicity. These great possessions she had a right to withhold; but if she was inclined to waive the exercise of her right in his favour, the obligation in the eye of common sense would be all on his side; and if his family and friends thought otherwise, he could only say that he was independent of them, and should be the more eager to form nearer and dearer ties.

The man who talked thus was young, handsome, eloquent, and impassioned. The woman who listened was equally young, still handsomer, and had as much secret tenderness in her heart as he had avowed passion in his. Nor did her re-

serve and her scruples hold out long against the pleadings of Clermont's affection and her own; but after a few weeks of courtship they were united; and the grateful Augusta, having in the course of their acquaintance discovered that Clermont had every virtue but those necessary ones of prudence and œconomy, wisely resolved that, as she did not bring him a fortune, she would, were it necessary, endeavour to save one; and that she would try to make amends by her care, for his pernicious want of management.

In the mean while Clermont's marriage had, though he kept it a secret from Augusta, done an irreparable injury to some of his expectations in life.

The brother of his mother, a gentleman of the name of Morley, went to India at an early age in order to make a fortune; and he succeeded so well, that he was able very soon to send considerable

remittances over to his less prosperous relations in England; and amongst these, though she was married to a man of landed property, he considered Mrs. Clermont, for he well knew the parsimonious disposition of her husband; and all the little indulgences which Charles Clermont could boast of in his childhood, and early youth, were the result of his uncle's bounty to his mother. But on the death of Mrs. Clermont, an event which had a fatal effect for some time on the health and spirits of her affectionate son, the bounty of Mr. Morley was continued to Charles: and if ever he was observed to be dressed like a gentleman, or to make a present to some indigent neighbour equal to the generosity of his heart, it was immediately after a remittance from India; and Clermont had recently received, and expended, a gift from his uncle, when his father died, and he saw himself the uncontrolled master of

what appeared to him an immense fortune. Soon after, he received by overland dispatches the joyful news that his uncle was about to sail for England; but the latter part of the letter contained information which completely counterbalanced the pleasure which the first part of it had given him.

Mr. Morley informed Clermont that he had long intended he should marry his ward, a beautiful and rich heiress, who boarded with a relation near London; and who, having seen him at a watering place, had written to her guardian that she was willing to comply with his wishes, and receive the addresses of his nephew. "Therefore," continued Mr. Morley, "you and you only can prevent this union, on which my heart is set, from taking place: but beware how you disappoint me!—Obey me, and I will give you 30,000*l.* on the day of marriage; disobey me, and I renounce you for ever!"