

**TALES OF PERPLEXITY. THE
RENDEZVOUS. THE
DISINHERITED. CROSS
PURPOSES**

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Tales of Perplexity. The Rendezvous. The Disinherited. Cross Purposes by Anonymous

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TALES
OF
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TALES *7. 1829.*

OF

PERPLEXITY.



THE RENDEZVOUS. THE DISINHERITED.

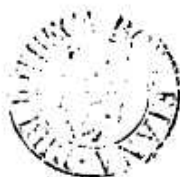
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THE RENDEZVOUS.

CHAPTER I.

THE brilliant sun of a clear frosty day enlivened the leafless woods of Shrublands, on the 20th of December, 1825, and the hearts of the party assembled within the mansion, were in unison with the cheerful scene.

The beautiful Amelia Durnford, and her cousin Margaret Lennox, on that day completed their 20th year. Their uncle, Mr. Melville, with whom they resided, had invited their most intimate neighbours to celebrate the event, and a few days previously, his wife received great pleasure from an unexpected addition to the party in her nephew Major Sydney, who had been some years abroad.

Amelia's toilette occupied much time and attention on the important day. "Major Sydney certainly is very handsome," said she to Margaret, as she gave the finishing turn to her beautiful auburn ringlets, "yet he appears cold

and reserved." "Can he remain so to-day?" whispered vanity as she cast a parting glance in the mirror; but this thought she concealed; and fully satisfied with her appearance, descended to the drawing room, where the visitors soon assembled.

The party consisted of Mr. Selwyn and his young bride, Mr. Cameron, a handsome man of three or four and thirty, who resided a few miles from Shrublands, and his friend Mr. Seymour, whose personal appearance and prepossessing manners, rendered him a welcome though an unexpected guest. Mrs. Sandys and her two daughters completed the circle.

Amelia had anticipated being seated by Major Sydney, and conquering the provoking apathy with which he had hitherto regarded her, but an unfortunate arrangement placed her by Miss Louisa Sandys, and opposite to him and Margaret. A look of displeasure clouded Amelia's lovely face, and Miss Louisa would have had an inattentive listener to the account of her last visit to London, had not a side glance informed Miss Durnford, the eyes of Mr. Cameron and Mr. Seymour were fixed on her with evident admiration. She instantly became all smiles and fascination, and cast many enquiring looks at Sydney, to ascertain whether he perceived their

attentions, but he was as much devoted to Margaret, as politeness would permit.

The ladies retired to the drawing-room, and the delight of Amelia enabled her to play 'l'aimable' so admirably till the arrival of the gentlemen, that every lady confessed Miss Durnford assisted Mrs. Melville greatly in entertaining her visitors.

The events of the evening did not diminish Amelia's pleasure: in singing she shone unrivalled by any of the party; Mr. Seymour possessed an excellent voice added to great taste, and joined Miss Durnford in several duets: they had concluded Zingarelli's beautiful "Dunque mio bene," when Margaret, addressing Major Sydney, who had been by her side nearly the whole evening, observed, "What expression Amelia has given to her favorite duet!" "Rather too much," replied Sydney, "I do not like to see a lady enter so completely into the feelings expressed by those words, particularly when singing with a perfect stranger." "You are fastidious," said Margaret. "It may be so," replied Sydney, "you gave all proper expression to Burns's beautiful 'Braes of Doun,' but then you were singing with *your cousin*, and were not *making love*. If Miss Durnford merely gives the expression that R. taught her, then it is acting;

and she possesses more confidence than I should like in my wife or sister; if she *feels* all her manner expresses, I should like such susceptibility still less." "You do not know Amelia," cried Margaret, "her feelings are so warm, she enters so completely into whatever she is doing, as to forget entirely who are present." Sydney smiled; he thought the eye of Amelia denoted a perfect consciousness, not only of the persons present, but of which person admired her most: fearing Margaret should think him censorious, he hesitated, then said, "Mr. Seymour certainly appears quite conscious, he is enjoying "*dolci momenti*," and Mr. Cameron seems enchanted with the "*soavi accenti*" of your lovely cousin: I fear she has wounded two hearts to-night."—"No wonder," said Margaret, "she is very lovely, and will doubtless win many more ere her first winter in London be over."—"Happy is he, who has a disengaged heart to offer," replied Sydney. As Margaret accidentally raised her eyes, she observed an evident expression of melancholy in his countenance. "Can Major Sydney admire Amelia," thought she, "if so, how strange his coolness to her since he has been at Shrublands." Sydney abruptly changed the discourse, and the carriages arriving, the party separated after making engagements for partners at the annual