Persuasion  
as inferior only to the blessing of a baronetcy;  
and the Sir Walter Elliot, who united these  
gifts, was the constant object of his warmest  
respect and devotion.  
  
His good looks and his rank had one fair  
claim on his attachment; since to them he  
must have owed a wife of very superior char-  
acter to any thing deserved by his own. Lady  
Elliot had been an excellent woman, sensible  
and amiable; whose judgement and conduct, if  
they might be pardoned the youthful infatua-  
tion which made her Lady Elliot, had never  
required indulgence afterwards.--She had  
humoured, or softened, or concealed his fail-  
ings, and promoted his real respectability for  
seventeen years; and though not the very hap-  
piest being in the world herself, had found  
enough in her duties, her friends, and her chil-  
dren, to attach her to life, and make it no mat-  
ter of indifference to her when she was called  
on to quit them.--Three girls, the two eldest  
sixteen and fourteen, was an awful legacy for  
a mother to bequeath, an awful charge rather,  
to confide to the authority and guidance of a  
conceited, silly father. She had, however, one  
very intimate friend, a sensible, deserving  
woman, who had been brought, by strong  
attachment to herself, to settle close by her, in  
the village of Kellynch; and on her kindness  
and advice, Lady Elliot mainly relied for the  
best help and maintenance of the good princi-  
ples and instruction which she had been anx-  
iously giving her daughters.