

could not forbear smiling, as he said with an ominous frown :

"You may well be ashamed of yourselves—but come," he continued kindly, on observing poor Belinda's pale cheek, and leading us forward ; "there is no harm done after all—I have just returned from seeing your friend Harvey Blanchard, Bell."

"Have you, indeed, uncle—and is he still going on well ?" enquired Belinda, with a quivering lip.

"Yes, my child, I found him reclining on an easy chair, smoking a cigar, with his feet upon the table, looking as happy and unconcerned as if he had been sitting on the quarter deck of a frigate, with a fair wind and every sail unfurled to catch the breeze."

Belinda painfully recoiled from the allusion.

"Alas, that picture may be too soon realized," she said in the lowest tone.

"Did you find Mr. Lindsay at home ?" I asked.

"No, he had not returned from the afternoon service. Aye, Lindsay is a fine fellow, Bell ; which of the two do you prefer my girl, for both have shown equal solicitude for you, the greater fools they. Well, well, I perceive I must not ask you, time will tell—yet remember this piece of advice from uncle Sam—if you are wise, take Lindsay, and stay at home in peace—if you are the simpleton I believe you to be, choose the handsome soldier, who will lead you many a wild dance over brake and over mountain—yet he has a noble heart too, and I should love him if it were only for the attentions and kindness he showed to my dear old mother."

Mr. Harrington affectionately greeted his daughter, and expressed solicitude for us both. Mrs. Harrington, we were informed, was unable to make her appearance at dinner, for which she sent me an apology.

"I trust Mrs. Harrington is not seriously indisposed," I enquired anxiously ; "and that we may not have to add her illness to our calamities."

"Oh no, do not distress yourself," replied Marion ; "mamma is only extremely nervous, the slightest alarm will affect her ; I remember once her being seized by a violent hysterical affection at a ball in Paris, merely from Baron Feldbach burning off his mustache as he was leading her through a crowded vestibule into the supper room—such a scene of confusion as it caused—ladies flying in all directions, lest their light dresses should become ignited—I have considered a mustache a most dangerous appendage ever since."

"Marion, shall I ever behold you in a serious mood," I replied, as I pressed her hands in mine ; "I delight in your gaiety, but there are times and seasons when I would gladly see it give place to reflection. Is this not a day suited to the latter, my child ?"

Mrs. Harrington admitted us to her boudoir in the evening, when we found her in all the languid indulgence of a *malade imaginaire*. Belinda ex-

pressed her deep regret, that anxiety for her should have caused her indisposition.

"I am so sensitive a creature," returned Mrs. Harrington affectedly, as she turned to me ; "I feel every thing so keenly, if I had no distresses of my own, those of my friends would overwhelm me. It is a great misfortune, my dear Mrs. Mary, yet it is more amiable than total apathy."

"Both are to be avoided," I replied ; "and are equally baleful, since the one unfits us for the performance of our duties, while the other pronounces us devoid of heart. Had all possessed your excessive sensibility last night, my friend, poor Belinda and I would have been left to the tender mercies of the waves."

"Very true, it would have been quite shocking," returned the lady ; "Marion, love, only conceive Madame Carçon has disappointed me in my cap—I sent Sparkes to see if it had arrived, and she brought me a note, saying that I could not have it until the end of next week. Is it not provoking ? I wished for it particularly tomorrow, as Baron Feldbach is such a connoisseur in ladies' dress."

Poor Mrs. Harrington ! how constantly did her vain frivolity call forth my pity. "Alas," said I mentally, as I gazed upon her ; "and is this a being fitted for the mansions of glory ! would she, with her tastes and feelings, be happy if she were even there ; has not our life been given us as a preparation for a better, and ought we not to follow those things which would improve rather than deteriorate our fallen state ? Yet are there not thousands who, like Mrs. Harrington, devote their time, their thoughts, their talents, month after month, year after year, to absurdities which would be blameable even in a child, but when years and experience are added, appear to us so devoid of reason, that we can only account for it by supposing that they labour under some fearful delirium—to such we would affectionately repeat the words of our blessed Saviour : 'Watch, therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord doth come.' It is difficult to spend the Sabbath day in the house of a worldly friend, with satisfaction to ourselves ; the conversation we hear, the neglect of those duties we are accustomed to pursue, is painful to us ; yet frequently the double guard this obliges us to keep over our hearts, lest we might be drawn into that we might afterwards regret, may render it equally beneficial, since we are too apt to rest upon human means, and to be satisfied with frames and feelings called forth by momentary impressions. Belinda did contrive to collect the servants for prayer on Sunday evenings. She was much beloved by them all ; they respected her motives, and felt grateful for the interest she evinced in their welfare, and there was not one amongst them who would have refused to encounter any difficulty for her sake."

The following day, Mr. Lindsay called at St. Margaret's. Mrs. Harrington had driven out with Mr.