

deeply engaged with her book, as having before been worsted in a combat of sharp speeches with that young lady, she by no means wished for a renewal of hostilities.

Isabel was invariably made low spirited by one of Lady Ashton's ill-natured attacks, especially so to-day, as the insults she had received were particularly painful, being both unfeeling and uncalled for. However, upon retiring to her own room at night, she found upon the dressing table a letter, the contents of which soon dispersed all gloomy thoughts, and Lady Ashton's rudeness was quite forgotten.

Louis, her own dear Louis, wrote that he would return in the early spring. My uncle he said, has or is about to purchase for me a practice in H—, so that I trust dearest, the period of your teaching will not be of long duration, as there will then be no cause to delay our union. I already in perspective, seem to see you my own dearest, presiding over my bright fireside in H—, the joy of my heart, and the good angel of my home.

I trust that you have made no arrangement with Mrs. Arlington but such as can easily terminate upon a short notice. I would not advise your taking any steps at present, as my uncle does not say positively that the purchase is absolutely made. But at all events you may depend upon seeing me in the early spring, as I have his orders to return.

The darkest hour is just before dawn. She had been so truly wretched an hour ago, and now how radiantly happy she was. Ah, with what sweet visions of a bright unclouded future did she fall asleep, to dream of her loved one far away, soon to be distant no longer.

When Isabel descended to the breakfast-room next morning, she looked so bright and happy, that Lady Ashton could account for it in no other way than that Arthur had proposed, and that she had accepted him, so she taxed him with it accordingly. Arthur was excessively amused, and so archly evaded giving a direct answer, that she became the more convinced of the truth of her own surmises, and grew so wrathful that Arthur fearing that in her anger she might annoy Miss Leicester, at length assured her that she need be under no apprehension, as nothing was farther from his thoughts.