

sometimes be induced to accompany the rest, when Miss Courtenay would insist upon her learning, and that Charles should teach her; but Amy proved an idle heedless scholar, and received many a rebuke.

"How distraught you appear, Lady Amanda," said Miss Courtenay one morning, when listless and forgetful she stood with the cue in her hand, until Sir Charles approached to guide it on the table, "you were all life, all spirits, when we first came, but of late you are grown quite sentimental. Charles, your pupil does you little credit—pray make her more attentive—surely the poor girl must be in love."

"In love," repeated Lady Matilda, "Amy is too serious to be in love with any thing, save teaching ragged children to read."

Amy's soft blue eye turned reproachfully on her, as she uttered this in a sarcastic tone, when the recollection of her devoted conduct towards Arthur, omitting her, she pressed her hand, as she added, "forgive me, I had forgotten."

Amy smiled, then begging her to finish the game for her, she left the room, and proceeded towards Lady Emily's boudoir. On entering, she found her engaged reading a letter, with little Susan sitting by her, working diligently at the gown she was so anxious to give her mother. On looking at the child, she noticed a bruise on her shoulder.

"Why, Susan, who has done this, who has hurt you," asked Amy.

"She did not mean to hurt me so much, ma'am," replied Susan, without looking up.

"Ah! could it have been your mother, poor child, and yet you still take such pleasure in working for her?"

"I take more," returned Susan; "I vexed her by wishing to read to her when she was busy, and, in her haste, she threw something at me; but she was very sorry when she saw how it hurt me—and I am sure, if she only goes to church, she will soon leave off getting into a passion. I shall try, therefore, and work very hard to finish her gown by next week."

"Will you let me help you, Susan, for you can never do it all in one day?"

Susan hesitated, and then replied:

"You are very kind, ma'am, but it would not be all my work then—and that is what I wish."

Lady Emily now laid down her letter, saying:

"Will your mother let you come again next Wednesday, which is a half holiday?—you could then finish it by Saturday easily."

"Oh, I dare say she would," replied the happy little girl; "thank you, ma'am"—and she went on plying her needle with redoubled alacrity; while Lady Emily, turning to Amy, said:

"Do you know that Harold is coming to us next Thursday?"

"Is it, can it be possible?" exclaimed Amy, clasping her hands joyfully—"I thought he would not arrive until Christmas."

"He comes earlier than he intended—hear what he says about it," returned Lady Emily, selecting a passage from the letter:

"I found the old castle looking so dull on my return, every thing bright and beautiful vanished, and, in their place, withered leaves whirling over my head, and the winds moaning through the deserted branches of the trees, that, after a week or two, I thought it was useless to remain grumbling over the fire with Martyn, who has become as silent as an owl—and so we proceed to Devon next week, and shall reach you certainly by Thursday.' Now does not this rejoice your heart, my little sister?"

"It is indeed delightful," said Amy, as the letter was again refolded, "and how quickly has the time passed since I came here—who would believe that three months have flown since I left Blonddeville castle."

"Time does indeed flit away," returned Lady Emily, gently sighing; "and yet, brief as life is, we are continually looking forward to some imaginary happiness, which must consume still more ere it arrives; the present scarcely ever satisfies—there is a constant longing, and waiting, and watching—a love of change, inherent in our nature, which powerfully expresses that this is not our rest—that, as immortal beings destined to a brighter home, our souls pant, as we proceed, for joys beyond any we can meet with here. Susan, your song would not be inapposite to what I mean—sing it, my child."

The child rose, and, standing before her amiable protectress, sang, in a low, plaintive voice, the following:

On summer eve, when I have roamed

O'er fields and lanes so gay,

And heard the merry song of birds,

And watched them soar away;

I've marked them hop from bough to bough,

Then seek a nobler flight—

Upward they bound through liquid air,

Far, far beyond the sight.

Then have I wished that I could be

A little bird, so blest—

To change the hopes, the cares of earth,

For heaven's eternal rest.

Lady Emily affectionately kissed the child, and, in after days, those simple words would often recur to her remembrance in the silence of her room.

There was great joy throughout the house when it was known that the Earl was so soon expected—for he was perfectly idolised by every one in it, but to none did it afford such intense happiness as to Amy. She was standing, gazing on his picture, in the saloon, where she happened to be alone, the day previous to the one on which he was to arrive, when Vernon, the old servant, entered to arrange the fire. He looked at her for some little time, and then said, smiling: