

tion were brought in subjection to the Divine guardian, would have exhibited the patience, the forbearance she has shown this night—never for one instant has her temper been ruffled—yes,” I continued, “there are many here, who to the world may appear as amiable as Belinda—but ere we can be satisfied that they are so in reality, we would ask how far the vain thought is checked, the voice of detraction and of envy silenced, how far each action of their lives in *private* as well as in public, is regulated upon principle, and their hearts in a state to adore and worship their Creator, to feel humble at their own unworthiness, to pass on through all difficulties, all opposition, all temptations in the narrow way, consistently and steadily—unless these can be answered affirmatively, where is their resemblance to Belinda, or their treasure laid—alas, not in Heaven.” I was so wearied with the noise, the heat, and the crowd, that I determined I would not again return to the ball room, and I took up a book, with which I amused myself for some time—nearly an hour must have elapsed when I was joined by Belinda, she looked pale and fatigued.

“Oh, how thankful I am to return to the quiet of this room,” she said, delighted to find me still sitting up; “my dear Mrs. Mary, this has been the longest evening I have passed for ages,” and she sat down on a low ottoman at my feet, and rested her head on my knee.

“Are your friends all gone away, my love?” I enquired.

“I left Mrs. Fortescue’s party in the hall—Harvey was going home with them.”

This was spoken in so sad a tone that I could not help saying:

“My beloved child, I have watched you with much interest through the night, and I have been gratified to see you adorn your religion so meekly and so beautifully.”

Belinda answered not, nor did she raise her head, but I heard a deep sob, which exceedingly distressed me. At the same moment a quick light step ascended the stairs, the door opened, and Captain Blanchard entered.

“I beg you a thousand pardons,” he said, “but Mrs. Fortescue thinks she left her shawl here. Good heavens, is there any thing the matter with Belinda?” he continued, advancing towards her, and taking her hand, he attempted to raise her head. “What, in tears; how is this—are they from grief or passion?”

“From neither, Captain Blanchard,” I replied, as calmly as I could; “they proceed from feelings which have been restrained for many hours, they were not intended to meet your sight—the shawl is on that chair—I pray you to leave us.”

But instead of this, he lifted Belinda from her recumbent position, and supporting her tenderly, he said:

“Belinda, my beloved, speak to me—have I said or done any thing to distress you?”

“Oh, no, no, dear Harvey,” she replied, endeavouring to check her tears; “do not think so—if you ask why I weep, I can scarcely tell you—but this I know, that it has relieved a heavy pain which I felt here,” and she pressed her hand on her side.

“Is Captain Blanchard coming with Mrs. Fortescue’s shawl?” enquired a servant, looking in at the door.

“Confound Mrs. Fortescue’s shawl,” exclaimed the impatient young man; “you will drive me mad amongst you—there it is, take it and beg they will not wait for me, I shall go home with Mr. Danvers.”

“That voice rivalled uncle Sam’s,” said Belinda, forcing a smile; “see you have quite frightened Mrs. Mary.”

“I have felt irritable all the evening,” replied Blanchard, throwing himself into the old arm chair; “and I fear I have shown it towards you, without intending it—I received a letter this morning from Ireland, which vexed me much.”

“Ah, I am sorry for that,” returned Belinda, placing herself by his side, and looking anxiously in his face; “your mother is not ill I trust.”

“No, thank God, but she tells me I have been rather extravagant of late, and that she cannot answer my demands at present.”

“Do not harass your mind with such things, dear Harvey, but trust a gracious God, who rules all things for our benefit. You must learn to curb your wishes within your means—shall I teach you?” and she took his hand as she added the last few words playfully.

“Heaven bless you, my own dear gentle guide,” he replied, drawing her towards him; “would that the hour were come, when our fortunes were united, for your sake surely I would then become more careful.”

The voice of Danvers calling to him, made him hastily rise—he affectionately wished her good night, and extending his hand to me as he passed, he hurried from the room, and soon afterwards left the house—thus ended the ball at St. Margerets.

The next morning presented a scene of great confusion and discomfort—every apartment disarranged, and withered garlands strewing the floor in all directions, giving an air of desolation and melancholy, which produced a chilling effect. Belinda rose in gay spirits, and assisted her favourite maid Fanny in restoring her boudoir to its accustomed simplicity. When she beheld it once more in order, she looked round delightedly, saying:

“My own peaceful room, never will I again suffer you to be molested and disturbed—yet how soon will you cease to be mine. Dear Mrs. Mary, kind, kind friend, how often shall I think of the hours I