

"She must be a phenomena indeed.— Really, you excite my curiosity more than ever,—and had you not promised I should not so easily have forgiven your keeping it a secret. However, you must be the bearer of my thanks to my unknown benefactor, —and I trust some time to have an opportunity of expressing them in person."

"Very well, I give you full permission, that is, if you can find her out."

A silence of a few moments followed, while a servant who had just entered the room, was occupied in lighting the lamp. On his withdrawal, Mrs. Mayo glanced at Charles; his countenance wore a peculiarly animated expression,—and, with woman's shrewdness, she half divined the cause.

"Can it be possible that he fancies the giver is Emily Linwood? If so he shall be speedily undeceived." Then entering into conversation, she endeavoured to "amuse him," as she said, by relating minutely, various little incidents that had lately occurred, and which, to one who had been, for a time, comparatively excluded from social intercourse, were not without interest,—and Charles listened with somewhat of pleased attention. At length Mrs. Mayo, in a careless, and apparently accidental manner, mentioned Emily Linwood, though very careful lest he should for one moment, imagine that she thought him at all interested in her.— Her manner of introducing the subject was certainly worthy of her.

"Really, my dear Mr. Percy," she began. "I am afraid I should make you vain, if I attempted to enumerate half the inquiries that have been made about you. Not content merely with sending their servants, a number of ladies have called in person,—one, especially, has been here every day, without an exception, since the accident;—but how indiscreet I am. I had forgotten that I was not to mention it."

"Your lady friends burden you with a great many secrets," said Charles laughing. "They must place great confidence in you."

"Certainly they do,—and you can bear witness, for one, how faithfully I have fulfilled my duty in this respect,—but, by the bye, it is a wonder Miss Linwood never called, especially before she left the city. I am sure gratitude for your mother's kindness, might have prompted her, if nothing else."

"Left the city, did you say, Mrs. Mayor?"

said Charles in a tone of astonishment.— "Why, where has she gone to?"

"To her native village, I believe. I called on her a few weeks previous to her departure, and she informed me she was about to give up school, and return to the residence of her aunt. I suppose you have never seen her cousin, who was on a visit to the city at the time to which I allude. He is a very fine looking young man,—but had nothing but his profession, which is that of a Physician, to support him, until very recently, when, most unexpectedly, he was put in possession of a large fortune. The cousins were brought up near each other, and have been attached from childhood I understand,—and, now that the chief obstacle to their marriage is removed, it will, I doubt not, speedily take place. But, dear me, how quickly time has flown," she said, taking out her watch and glancing at it, "you must excuse me, Mr. Percy, for I have been gossiping so long and idly, that I had nearly forgotten a special engagement, so I must bid you adieu for the present,—and, indeed, you need rest, for you look positively wearied;" with these words the lady quitted the apartment.

Charles was again alone,—but what a difference a few moments had wrought in his feelings. Then, hope was predominant; now a feeling akin to despair was rapidly gaining ascendancy.

"How blessings brighten as they take their flight," is frequently the exclamation, so true to experience, of those who are doomed with streaming eyes to watch the departure of something fondly cherished, but which, until that memorable moment, has never appeared in so valuable a light,—and thus it was with Charles. Never before had he discovered how strongly the image of Emily Linwood was impressed on his heart, now that she was apparently lost to him for ever. Her voice, her smile, the changing expressions of her countenance, and almost every sentence that had fallen from her lips, memory was assiduous in restoring, restoring but to deepen his anguish. How vainly he determined to banish her from his thoughts, how vainly resolved to forget her. He endeavoured to divert his mind by reading,—but the book conveyed no instruction to him; his eye mechanically wandered over the pages, but the heart was uninterested,—and