

But her reveries were interrupted by the entrance of Alice, who had tarried in the parlor until she became more composed; for no consideration would have induced her to disclose to her mother, the painful and bitter thoughts which had been swelling within her heart, lest she should add one additional pang to that already wounded and failing spirit.

So well had she succeeded in subduing all traces of emotion, that it was with quite a cheerful air she entered the room, and affectionately addressed Mrs. Weldon.

"I hope you feel none the worse for sitting up, dear Mamma. I am afraid you thought me very long gone, but I have been detained a little by meeting with friends, who made many kind inquiries after you. I dare say, though, Jane has been so attentive, that I need not flatter myself you missed me much."

"Missed you, dear child, you are always missed, though Jane is a good girl, and I have needed nothing. But come, take off your bonnet and shawl, and sit down by me. I want to have a good look at you, and to hear all about your walk, whom you have seen, and what you have heard."

"Indeed you shall be speedily gratified; but you have not told me how you felt, yet?"

"Well, dear, no worse, and I think a little better than when you went out. This delicious summer air has quite revived me."

"Ah, Mamma, I do think you are growing stronger of late, and, perhaps, you will be spared to me for many, many years."