

first heed a low knocking at the door, until Ursula re-entering, unclosed it and admitted the young Lord Arthur Clarendon.

"I am come to take you to the drawing-room," he said, approaching Amy; "my brother sent me for you."

As the child spoke he took her hand, and looking earnestly in her face, continued, "I hope you are not going away again soon?"

"I hope not very soon," replied Amy, smiling as she stroked his fair open brow.

"How like he is to the Earl," remarked Ursula, "do you often have such romps as we beheld a little while ago on the lawn, when you seemed so merry?"

In an instant the boy became all animation.

"Oh yes, often," he replied, laughing at the recollection; "I love to play a trick on Harold, he constantly plays them on me, and he is so cunning that I can seldom return them; that was capital fun just now; are you fond of running a race?" looking at Amy.

"I fear I have never tried," she replied, much amused at the enquiry, "but I shall like to see you run, and hear you laugh as often as possible, for it is quite delightful to me."

"Is it indeed, then you will just suit me—but come away, for the dinner waits."

Amy immediately rose, and attended by her young escort entered the superb drawing-room, which was on the same floor with her boudoir, and formed one of a suite. The Earl and Mr. Martyn came forward to receive her, and both actually started at her surpassing beauty, which appeared even more conspicuous than it had done in her morning attire.

The Earl led her down stairs, and there was a suavity of manner as he addressed her, which removed the restraint she naturally felt on being so completely amongst strangers. Mr. Martyn spoke to her with the affection of a father, and she seemed to derive much support from his presence, while the young Lord Arthur's liveliness threw a gaiety on the party which to her at least was new. Mr. Martyn drew her gradually into conversation, and was evidently surprised at her understanding. Her answers were given with great diffidence, yet with clearness, and simplicity, and he gazed on her in tenderness and admiration; as for the Earl he listened with mute attention, for there was a melody in her voice, peculiar to herself, and a softness in her manner without the slightest affectation, most attractive. Amy was indeed a beautiful specimen of Heaven's creation, too perfect, as Mr. Martyn afterwards said, for this earth.

In courtesy to their fair guest, the gentlemen retired from table soon after the cloth was removed, and accompanied her back to the drawing-room, which was now brilliantly lit up, but as the evening was warm the windows were all open. Lord Arthur

drew close to her side, and holding her hand, led her out on the balcony to look, as he said, at the view by moonlight.

"I hate being shut up in a room, don't you?" asked the boy, "now I should like a good race on the lawn, if I had any one to run with me."

"A fair hint, young sir," said Lord Blondeville, laughing, as he followed them, "do you think Lady Amanda will take it?"

"Oh no, she says she is not fond of running, but do you come, only one race," and the boy tried to draw him to the steps.

"Not tonight, dear Arthur; you must for once go alone."

"Must I? then here goes," and he sprang lightly down, running like a fawn, till he was lost to their view.

"What a happy loveable being," said Amy, "how I envy him his *gaité de cœur*."

"I trust I shall see you as happy ere we part," replied the Earl. "One so young has no right to sorrow. Will you leave the task to me?"

Amy's dove-like eyes met his, as he spoke, while, with sweet solemnity in her tone, she murmured, "Under a kind Providence."

"He pressed her hand, adding feelingly, "God bless you." They then rejoined Mr. Martyn.

"Do you inherit the taste of Agnes, of your mother, for music, Lady Amanda," asked the latter, with hesitation, and drawing her attention to a grand piano forte, which was open."

"I am passionately fond of it," she replied; "it has been one of my blessings. But pray call me Amy. I feel as if there were none near to care for me, when I hear nothing but cold Lady Amanda."

"And may I call you Amy, too?" asked Lord Arthur, bounding in again, and overhearing the request.

"Oh, yes, yes, if you love me."

"Dear child," said Mr. Martyn, drawing her towards him, "you shall be Amy to us both."

"And why not to all?" again asked Lord Arthur, putting his arm round Lord Blondeville and trying to bring him nearer to Lady Amanda, "why should Harold be left out?"

Mr. Martyn looked at the Earl and smiled, who, stroking the boy's head, gently pushed him away, and joined in the entreaty, that Amy would try the instrument.

She immediately sat down, and after pausing for one moment, commenced a strain of sacred melody, so touching, so beautiful, that as her auditors gazed on her seraphic upturned countenance, and listened to her voice, tears filled their eyes—the highest tribute they could pay. When she ceased, Mr. Martyn, bending over her, pressed his lips on her forehead, and then turned away to the window in silence.

"And you have actually been for six weeks scarcely two miles off, and, until today, we have