

saw from the serenity, depicted on his benignant countenance, that his mind had regained its wonted peace, and as she flew forward and pressed her lips on his cheek, she said :

"You have often told me of the power of religion to support us under trials, but now I see it with my own eyes."

"I humbly trust through God's help, that no tribulation may have power to shake my faith in His mercy, my precious child," replied Mr. Neville, "but in this instance He has displayed so much goodness, and has showed me so many blessings, that I can only exclaim : ' what reward shall I offer unto the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done unto me ; I will receive the cup of salvation and call upon His name ; and pay my vows in the presence of His people.' But it is time to join our kind and noble host, who waits for us in the breakfast room, after which I am going to read prayers in the private chapel. Mr. Dalton will officiate for me in my church this morning."

Blanche felt a little nervous at the idea of meeting Lord De Melfort, and gladly accepted the support of her father. As they descended the staircase, Mr. Lewis met them, and conducted them to the breakfast room, where she was welcomed with courtesy and kindness, both by the Earl and Colonel Lennox. She tried to express her grateful acknowledgments to the former, but the words died away on her lips, which quivered from the emotion she felt. Lord De Melfort pressed her hand tenderly, and leading her towards the table, said smiling :

"I expected to receive a good scolding rather than thanks, for running away with you so unceremoniously last night in spite of your will—you see I can have one of my own sometimes, and that I am not always to be refused with impunity."

Blanche ventured to raise her eyes to his, as he uttered this in a low yet playful tone, and in their soft expression her affection was so visibly revealed, that a doubt as to the real state of her feelings could no longer exist. One answering look from him told her his discovery, and brought the crimson to her before pale cheek ; but his conversation during the repast, he chiefly directed to Mr. Neville, while Colonel Lennox, who had been by no means an unobservant spectator, restored her to self possession by discoursing on indifferent subjects.

At the appointed hour, the Earl's numerous household were assembled, and the chapel doors thrown open, and as Blanche, hanging on his arm, looked timidly around her, she discovered amongst the group, the hunchback, improved certainly by dress and care, yet possessing a face so completely in contrast with that of Lord De Melfort, that the well known fairy tale of beauty and the beast, recurred to her instant recollection. Her sudden start directed the attention of the Earl to the object of her remark ; "do not fear him," he said, in a saddened tone, "it is

my earnest desire to humanise him if possible, he has been cruelly treated, and is very sensible of kindness."

Most beautifully and impressively was the service performed by the good minister, who while thus engaged, suffered not a thought of earth to interfere with his duty, to his Divine Master. His great aim was to preach Jesus Christ as the sole means of our salvation—to convince sinners of their lost state, and that they must look to him alone to be saved, even as the Israelites looked on the brazen serpent in the wilderness, and were healed. The most earnest exhortations to repentance, would avail little, he knew, to produce amendment, unless the power of the Saviour was thus enforced, since this is the only style of preaching which God blesses. None could hear him unimproved, for the whole tenor of his life was a practical illustration of his creed.

The attention of Lord De Melfort, and Colonel Lennox, was profound. Amongst the congregation, Blanche noticed with interest the blind grandmother of Grace, and the saint-like expression of her venerable countenance as she listened to words which gave promise of such imperishable happiness in another world. On the conclusion of the service, Blanche walked over to her and pressed her hand ; but not a word was spoken by any one until they had left the chapel. On again passing through the hall she paused to admire its beautiful structure. It was rather low for the size, and was supported by marble columns, while its light was received principally from the brilliant staircase, where windows of stained glass reflected their bright colours along the whole gallery. On ascending these, Lord De Melfort led her into the drawing-room, the airy cheerfulness of which particularly struck her. All the windows were thrown open, and the elastic step of Blanche told the happiness which reigned in her pure breast, as she advanced towards them.

"Often as I have admired this lovely spot," she said, turning to her father, "never did it appear so perfectly beautiful as today. Do you not agree with me, papa?"

Mr. Neville smiled at her enthusiasm, and fondly stroked her animated face, while Lord De Melfort replied with much feeling :

"I have seen it look as beautiful, but never since my childish days, when the presence of one fair and good threw over it the same charm which now it wears in your presence."

"You will turn this young head, my lord," said the gratified father, drawing his daughter towards him. "She is not proof against the vanity allied to her sex, rest assured." The embarrassment of Blanche was relieved at this moment by the entrance of Lady Neville, who came, full of affectionate anxiety, to enquire after Mr. Neville and her beloved niece, whose misfortune she had learnt only a few hours previous, and she could not rest until she had seen them both.