

looked not beyond this world for happiness; consequently, when sorrow overtook her, she was unprepared, confounded, and in utter darkness.

Since her return home she had experienced more than usual kindness and affection from her husband, and she had just begun to feel that in him, at least, she was repaid for all her young sorrows, when one morning she received a visit from Mrs. Black, who came to welcome her on her return, and to condole with her upon the loss she had experienced in her brother.

"I heard it with regret from Captain Warburton, at Mrs. Hamilton's ball," said the widow, in a tone of mock feeling.

"At Mrs. Hamilton's ball!" exclaimed Katherine, her eyes dilating in astonishment. "Surely Captain Warburton did not go to a ball at the time of my dear Ernest's death?"

"He had accepted the invitation some days before your letter reached him," returned Mrs. Black with a sweet smile; "he would have sent a refusal afterwards, I know, but Selina Dashwood said it would be such a disappointment to Mrs. Hamilton, who wished to collect all the handsome men at her party, that he yielded his wishes to hers."

With what feelings of indignation did Katherine hear this! Her heart throbbed, while she literally trembled with jealous passion. Her countenance betrayed her emotion to her wily companion, who proceeded,

"I assure you he did not stay late. I think he only waltzed once with Selina, for, poor girl, she sprained her ankle, and he was so kind as to drive her home. I am certain he did not return again; but, dear me! how pale and ill you are looking, my dear Mrs. Warburton! I am really quite concerned to see you."

"I am never well in this horrid place; I hate and detest it," replied Katherine, with a vehemence she could not control.

"Horrid! do you call it? Why,—— is considered one of the most charming spots in Kent; I am quite surprised."

"Charming as it may be, I wish I had never entered it," and Katherine's little foot beat rapidly on the floor, while tears sprang to her eyes.

"That is not very complimentary to Captain Warburton, at all events," returned Mrs. Black. "There are very many beautiful girls who would gladly take your place; he is so much liked and admired."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Katherine, who was saved the humiliation of making a most indignant reply, by the entrance of Captain Beauchamp, who, bowing slightly to her companion, approach-

ed her with much feeling in his manner, expressing a hope that she was better: the agitation of her beautiful features could not escape his notice, and he involuntarily looked from her to Mrs. Black to discover the cause; but the widow, who felt for him an invincible dislike, immediately rose to take leave, saying as she did so,

"I am sorry I cannot stay to benefit from the discourse of your visitor, my dear! but I really forgot to bring my prayer-book, and having caught a cold, I am not in voice for psalm-singing. Captain Beauchamp, I am sure you will excuse me."

A stiff, cold bend of the head was all the reply he gave as she tripped past him and left the room.

"Poor creature!" he then murmured, taking the seat she had quitted.

"Thank goodness she is gone!" exclaimed Katherine, her tears now gushing forth. "I never see her that she does not tell me something to make me miserable."

"Has she so much power? if so, I would not admit her to my presence," replied Captain Beauchamp.

"I never do when I can help it, but it is difficult at all times to be denied."

Katherine paused and then enquired in a faltering tone,

"Were you aware that Neville went to Mrs. Hamilton's ball, at a time when I was in so much affliction at home?"

Captain Beauchamp reblenched. It was an awkward question; but he instantly answered it.

"He told me he was going, but I think he had not received your letter when he said so."

"How unkind! and I away, and thinking so much about him. Would you have acted so, Captain Beauchamp?" and the beautiful girl looked earnestly in his face.

"You know I never go to balls," he replied, evading the touching enquiry. After a moment's hesitation, he added: "This, I imagine, is the intelligence Mrs. Black pained you by giving; if Warburton has not mentioned it, shall I be pardoned for advising you not to reproach him for what, in all probability, he has since regretted. Remember he is very young; ten years hence he might act very differently."

"Ah! he is old enough to have acted with more feeling. I wish he thought as you do on most subjects."

Katherine paid this compliment in perfect simplicity, and really wishing what she said, from love to her husband; but it pained and confused Captain Beauchamp, who, faintly smiling, replied,

"You are very kind, but you forget, I fear,