

done with so much tact and consideration, as to leave her no alternative, and oblige her to receive them. Neither was there anything in his behaviour or conversation that she could complain of, or that others would remark. All this made it very difficult for her to know how to act, as she did not wish to hurt his feelings by unnecessary particularity, or by the assumption of unusual formality lead him to suspect the true cause; and thus perhaps lay herself open to the possibility of being supposed to have imagined him to be in love with her, without due cause. Isabel knew that she was not deceived; she knew also that she must be very careful to conceal that she was so well aware of the state of his feelings towards her.

"The Morningtons are coming to stay at Ashton Park: are you not glad, Emmy?" said Everard, as he joined Isabel, Emily, and the children, in their ramble, one bright day in the midsummer holidays. "Glad, I should think so!" returned Emily; "but when do they come?"

"Very soon, I believe; and I expect we shall have jolly times. Harry's so full of life, and that merry little Lucy is the spirit of fun. May will be here shortly. And the Harringtons have friends with them, so we shall be able to get up some nice picnics."

"But is not Ada coming?" asked Emily.

"Why, of course she is," returned Everard; "but if you have not heard the 'latest,' I shall not enlighten you sister mine."

"O Everard! I'm all curiosity," cried Emily, opening her blue eyes very wide.

"You mean that Ada is engaged to Mr. Ashton," said Isabel.

"Yes; but how on earth did you know it?" he returned.

"Do you know the Morningtons?" asked Emily. "Have you known them long?"

"Longer than you have, I fancy," replied Isabel. "I have known them as long as I can remember. Ada and I had the same room at school. She is my dearest and most intimate friend."

"I suppose you know Harry and the rest very well?"

"O yes, we were quite like brothers and sisters,"

"When are they expected?" asked Emily.