

Alas ! if he for whom I have made the sacrifice should not repay me, miserable shall I be indeed ! My heart often misgives me as to the strength of Neville's affection."

"Far be it from me to wish to pain and distress you, my poor child !" replied Mrs. Bruce, pitying her natural burst of feeling, and pressing her affectionately to her bosom ; "I would only wish you to make allowances for others, and to remember your own faults. This would indeed, be good for us all, for we are ever prone to see errors in a brother or a sister to which we are blind in ourselves."

"Let me be what I may, I should grieve were I like that bold, forward creature, Selina Dashwood," returned Katherine warmly. "Look at her behaviour in church, so eager for admiration ; it is quite scandalous."

"My dear child ! rather look at the end of such things, and the doom that awaits all who thus desecrate the holy House of God, if they repent not ere they die. Surely this is sufficient to call forth your commiseration and your prayers," observed Mr. Bruce with sweet seriousness.

"If I were like you it might, dear Mrs. Bruce ! Had my mother or my governess instilled such principles into my breast when I was a little child, they would not now have had to mourn my ingratitude and my loss. But for one thought that was bestowed upon religion, fifty were given to my dress, my manners, how I should carry my head and turn out my feet. Oh ! it was wearisome."

A slight knock at the door at this instant stopped further conversation. The visitor was Captain Beauchamp, whose countenance expressed sorrow on perceiving Katherine in tears. She dashed them from her cheek as she rose to answer his salutation, when he said, "Warburton was looking for you just now ; I think he has a letter for you."

"A letter for me !—where, where is he ?" exclaimed Katherine, her whole thoughts and feelings undergoing an immediate change. "Dear Mrs. Bruce, do you think it can be from—?"

"I sincerely hope it may, my love, and that it contains glad tidings. Captain Beauchamp will, no doubt, see you across the square, and pray let me have a little note in the evening to say that all is well. Heaven bless you !"

And the matron affectionately kissed the agitated girl, who, gladly accepting the support that was granted, hastened with all speed to her husband's quarters.

He was not there, but the letter she found lying on the table. Captain Beauchamp would have immediately withdrawn, but she turned so

pale as she broke the seal that he paused. She had scarcely read a few lines, when, uttering a wild scream, she fell back on the sofa. This was no moment for cold reserve ; Captain Beauchamp closed the door and approached her, speaking to her in a voice of kindness, begging her to be calm.

"Oh ! it is too dreadful ; I cannot, cannot bear it. Oh Ernest ! my darling brother Ernest !" exclaimed poor Katherine, sobbing violently.

"Pray, dear Mrs. Warburton ! do not yield to this intense grief. You have not even read all your letter," said Captain Beauchamp ; "trust in God that the tidings are not so evil as you imagine."

Katherine gasped for breath ; she could not answer him, and fearing every instant she would faint, he held a glass of water that he found standing on the side-board, to her lips ; she drank some, saying,

"I thank you very much for your kindness ! now leave me to myself, and I will try and read the rest."

But Captain Beauchamp hesitated ; he stood silently before her, watching her varying countenance, as she vainly strove to conclude her task.

"It is useless ; my eyes are blinded with my tears," at length she exclaimed, pressing the letter to her bosom. "Where is Neville ? I wish he had waited to give it to me himself."

A loud laugh in the passage grated harshly on her ears as she said this. Captain Beauchamp went hastily to the door.

"Warburton ! you are wanted,—come in !"

"What the deuce is the matter now ?" enquired the young man, carelessly, as he entered, "Why, Kate in tears ! has any thing happened ?"

"Oh ! Neville, my darling brother Ernest is dangerously ill—is dying !" sobbed Katherine ; "and I am summoned home immediately."

"Ah ! that is bad news indeed. I am sorry for it," replied Captain Warburton, surprised and shocked, which Captain Beauchamp observing, now left them together. "Yet do not despair, sweet Kate ! he may recover, and perhaps become the means of restoring you to your parents' favor."

"Alas ! I fear not, dearest Neville. The letter is from my father, and his cold, heartless expressions, add a poignancy to my grief beyond all words ; read it yourself, for I cannot."

Captain Warburton sat down by her side, with feelings softened and affectionate ; but how were these changed into marble as he read the following unkind and most unnatural epistle.

"I write this by desire of your mother, to inform you that your brother Ernest is dangerous—