

over to Belinda's stand of flowers, exclaiming, as she bent over them :

"What exquisite geraniums these are, Miss Harrington—how do you manage to preserve them in such perfection during the winter; mine are nothing compared to these, you make me quite covetous."

Belinda instantly came forward.

"You seem very fond of flowers," she returned, "will you allow me to gather you some?" and she commenced breaking off one or two of the finest.

"Oh, no no, pray do not," said Mrs. Fortescue; "I have a sweet collection here," and she held up the bouquet which Blanchard had given her. "Is it not a love? I would not add one leaf to it for worlds," pressing it fondly towards her.

"Will you give me one Belinda?" asked Blanchard, with a smile full of meaning.

"Must I try you again?" she returned, playfully placing the flower in his hand, with a grace so winning, that he was constrained to remark :

"You are indeed all gentleness, my own confiding Belinda; how difficult it would be to chafe your sweet temper."

"Oh, praise me not," replied Belinda, while gratified affection beamed in her soft eyes, as she met his, full of admiration, "it is most dangerous, particularly from you."

"Captain Blanchard," said Mrs. Fortescue, "at what hour tomorrow will you come to me?"

"I am not quite sure that I can attend you tomorrow," he returned, as he left the recess.

"Oh, indeed you must, it is our second rehearsal, and you were so inattentive a Romeo the last time that it was quite shocking—you must really learn to die with more propriety. Miss Harrington, I am going to have an amateur play next week, I hope you will come to it—I am promised a full attendance, and I have got such a sweet dress for Juliet, I had it sent me from Paris."

Belinda's happy countenance again became overcast, but she spoke not.

"And who is to perform Juliet?" asked Mr. Danvers.

"Who? why myself of course—now do, there's a dear, take the part of the lean apothecary."

"That might be dangerous, for I should be sorely tempted to poison you in good earnest."

"Horrid creature," murmured Mrs. Fortescue, moving away, and taking up a book from the table.

Blanchard had drawn near the old chair during these remarks, he looked on it for some time, and then said to Belinda :

"How well do I remember this! I can almost fancy the old lady still reclining here—those were happy days love, were they not?"

"They were indeed," replied Belinda, with a gentle sigh; "and yet I would not recall them, or my own dear grandmama, even if I could, to this world of care."

"That was sadly spoken, Belinda."

"Harvey, will you grant me one favour," and she approached him nearly.

"Yes, surely, a thousand, what would you have?"

Belinda hesitated, she seemed fearful of expressing her wishes, at length she gained courage to say :

"I would wish you to have nothing to do with this foolish play."

"I care not for the play," he quickly rejoined; "but as I have promised, I must perform—and if you wish to please me, you will endeavour to rise above these foolish prejudices—shall we go down stairs?"

She accepted the arm he offered, with a subdued air of disappointment. He then approached Mrs. Fortescue, and lightly touching her on the shoulder with the flower he held, added :

"Presto bella Signora."

"How could you disturb me," returned the lady, starting round, and looking up in his face with childish simplicity; "I was reading 'Newton's Cardephonia'—I declare I should become quite good if I were to remain in this room. What is Cardephonia, it is something from the heart is it not?"

"Aye, the heart is a dangerous subject," replied Blanchard; "it has a will of its own, which may not be controlled—what say you Belinda?"

"That if we suffer it to follow its own inclinations, they will ever lead us to evil and to sorrow," she replied, in a low soft tone.

"And how may the torrent be stemmed, sweet lady?"

"By prayer to Him who never turns away from our petitions."

Her voice, as she uttered these few words, appeared to touch him, for his light manner underwent a change as he pressed the arm which hung upon him. They then left the room, followed by Captain Harrington and Mr. Danvers, who had become excellent friends. I stood for a moment to watch their receding steps—the gay music still resounded from below—bright forms were rapidly passing, while the laugh and sounds of mirth rung in my ears. I hastily closed the door, and casting myself into a seat, covered my face with both hands.

"No," I exclaimed after the reflection of many minutes; "Belinda will, I fear, never know happiness with Harvey Blanchard—his power over her is greater than she imagines, and will need her constant most strenuous efforts to arrest its progress—oh, he is not the one to have trusted with the gentle being, who in one moment he caresses and the next he checks, according to his caprice—he is all too volatile, too young, and too beautiful, and yet how alive to good impressions. I am convinced he loves her the more for her engaging piety, even while he appears to condemn its strictness. Well he may, for who but one whose every thought, word and so-