

seldom return home until their late dinner hour, was a sad alloy, until she became more accustomed to the loss of his society. Her children were a never failing source of delight to her, and though their nurseries were small, compared with the dear old tapestried room at the Abbey, yet as they continued well and lively, and perfectly unconscious of the change, she could feel no uneasiness.

As soon after their arrival in town, as possible, she was presented at Court in due form, by the Countess of R——, and the effect which her beauty and simplicity produced was quite equal to the expectations indulged in by her mother, and sufficient to turn her young head. Then followed dinners, balls and operas, in such rapid succession that she almost felt bewildered; it is true there were moments when she suffered some uneasiness at the thought of the days and weeks which were thus entirely consumed by pleasure. The education she had received from Mr. Mortimer, and the advice of her sister Mary carrying the conviction to her heart, that she was not walking with God, while so employed; but this was again relieved by the remembrance that her husband had led her into her present mode of life; how then could she be to blame? She had just enough religion to cast a shade over every scene of gaiety she entered, without possessing sufficient to guard her from their snares. The beautiful letters she received, both from Mr. Mortimer and Mary, tended to keep alive the sacred fire within her breast; but faintly it flickered amidst the numberless fascinations which daily decoyed her away from the paths of peace. She occasionally expressed her uneasy doubts to Sir Claude, but he could not comprehend them, or if he did, his own pursuits engrossed him too entirely to permit his entering into all her feelings: although he watched over her with sedulous care, allowing no unsafe intimacies that could possibly be avoided, and admitting none to his home save those from whose society she might reap advantage and improvement. His success in the House had far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of his friends; his fine decisive spirit, united as it was to so sound a judgment, being quickly recognized, became duly valued, while his speeches, at once manly and sensible, were admired, and himself courted and flattered in all the circles he entered: could pride and ambition (his two idols) desire more? He was pleased to perceive the admiration which Beatrice called forth wherever she appeared, as it was a compliment paid to his taste; and a gratification afforded to his vanity as well as to his affection.

One morning an invitation to a ball at the Countess of C——'s, was presented to Beatrice, and as ——— house was considered amongst the most fashionable in town, she anticipated it with infinite pleasure. Never had she looked so exquisitely lovely as on this night, when she entered her own drawing room, where Sir Claude awaited her: and the affec-

tionate pressure of his hand as he led her down stairs expressed that he thought the same. Most graciously were they received by their noble hostess, to whom Beatrice, as a stranger, was presented: her cheek at the moment tinged with crimson, for she FELT that every eye was upon her, while the whispered remark caught her ear: "Who is that very beautiful young creature hanging on the arm of that distinguished looking man?" The answer given in the voice of Lady Julia Russel caused her to start round. "Good heavens! Sir Claude and Lady Brereton, I protest," and she flew forward as she spoke, grasping the hand of Beatrice most tenderly, and expressing her delight at once more meeting her. Beatrice who was happy to see one familiar face, received her salutation with much cordiality—not so, Sir Claude, who returned her address to him in his stiffest, coldest manner, and passed on. The rooms were already crowded to excess, and brilliant even to dazzling. The heart of Beatrice fluttered with pleasure, as she listened to one of Strauss' most beautiful waltzes.

"Now do let me waltz tonight, Claude," she whispered, "if not with another, at least with you." Sir Claude shook his head.

"Then why was I taught if it is considered indecorous?" asked Beatrice, rather mortified.

"To please your mother, I imagine—certainly not me," replied her husband. "She would like to see you in the arms of every man in the room could she only hear your dancing praised. I confess I have no such ambition."

Beatrice pouted at this sarcasm, while her little foot continued to beat time with the tempting music. Lord Stormont at this moment advanced, offering her his arm to lead her away.

"When I am tired of my husband I will accept it," she replied; "at present I prefer to remain where I am."

Sir Claude smiled.

"You must pardon her country manners, my lord," he said. "When she has spent a few more seasons in town she will have acquired the polish of Lady Stormont."

"Then I hope I may never spend a few more seasons in town," muttered Beatrice, colouring.

Sir Claude checked her with a frown, while Lord Stormont walked away; but as the laws of fashion did not permit his remaining too long with his wife, Sir Claude, after he had conducted her to a seat, left her, when a crowd of admirers immediately surrounded her, in whose attentions she soon forgot her vexation and recovered her good humour. The first opportunity Lady Julia could obtain of getting near to converse with her, was eagerly caught at.

"Now do come and sit in this quiet recess," she said, linking her arm within that of Beatrice; "for I am dying to hear all about dear, delightful, gloomy Norwood Abbey. I am told great changes have taken