

Bridget left the room, when Katherine, pressing her hands convulsively together, exclaimed:

"God have mercy on me and teach me patience; now I understand why Mrs. Bruce wished me to return. Neville has formed some new and dangerous intimacy. Alas! unfortunate that I am, go where I may, sorrow follows me like a dark cloud; but I deserve it all, I deserve it all."

In much agitation she wrote a few lines to Mrs. Bruce, requesting to see her on the morrow. By the time she had sealed and despatched it, the shades of evening were drawing near, and obscuring every object "Gloomy as my thoughts," said the unhappy young wife, sitting down by the window. "Oh! my Father, try me in any way but this. To lose the affections of my husband, to see them given to another, would indeed be a heavier grief than I could bear."

Unguarded words, uttered in a moment of strong excitement, since the cup offered by our Heavenly Physician is the one chosen in wisdom; its bitterness has been experienced by him who drank it to the dregs for our sakes, and shall we murmur when we are only called upon to taste it for our own?

At an early hour on the following day, Mrs. Bruce came to Katherine, who embraced her with much affection as she flew towards her, saying:

"How kind this is of you; I am quite ashamed to give you so much trouble, but when I wrote my note last evening I felt so unhappy that indeed I longed to see you. I hope your walk has not tired you."

And she placed an easy chair for her friend, who replied:

"Not in the least, my love; the morning is so fine that I quite enjoyed it; but you tell me you were unhappy last evening; what occasioned this, my child?"

"A few words uttered by Bridget about Lady Marley and Neville," returned Katherine, blushing deeply. "I thought they explained why you wished me to return home; who is this Lady Marley?"

"She is a beautiful young woman, my dear, married to an old man, whose title and wealth were, I fear, the only temptations," returned Mrs. Bruce.

"And is Neville so very intimate at their house?" asked Katherine with hesitation.

Mrs. Bruce gazed on our heroine a few moments, and perceiving her troubled countenance, said:

"My dear girl, it is not for your peace to ask such questions, if even I were inclined to answer them. I wrote to urge your return home, be-

cause I felt it my duty to do so; beyond this I have no right to go; all I would advise is circumspection in you; I well know how difficult it is to command strong feelings; nay, how impossible, without Divine help, for this I feel assured you constantly pray, therefore be of good courage, faint not, and God will in his own time reward you."

"Tell me only this!" implored Katherine; "have you any reason to suppose that Neville is attached to Lady Marley? Oh! do not conceal from me all that you know."

Truth was engraven on the heart of Mrs. Bruce, and to prevaricate she considered equal to the sin of lying, but to perform the part of a tale-bearer—a mischief-maker, was foreign to her principles.

"Katherine," she replied, very gravely; "you must not probe me thus, but attend to my advice; try to make the home of your husband as happy and as cheerful to him as possible, concealing from him all your little domestic annoyances, and never reproaching him for his repeated absences; for your sake I have studied his character and disposition; they are peculiar, yet under all his apparent coldness and neglect, I am convinced there exists in his breast a strong affection for you; which you may increase or lose as you conduct yourself under your trying circumstances."

"Oh! if I only thought so," said Katherine, clasping her hands, "what strength would it give me to proceed on my weary way."

"Then do think so, my child; but let not this idol stand between you and your God; as you value your eternal happiness, remember also that he has a soul to be saved; let this reflection make you less anxious to retain his love than to become the means of his conversion. To assist this, be forbearing and patient towards his faults, and doubly watchful over yourself."

With the deepest respect did Katherine listen to the maternal admonitions of her friend, who after some further conversation on the subject, announced to her that Mr. Bruce had at length made up his mind to retire from the army, and that they were going to reside in Scotland.

"The only regret I shall experience will be in parting from you, dear Katherine," she continued; "but so long as you remain at Canterbury, I shall have the comfort to know that you are near good and kind friends."

Katherine expressed sincere sorrow at the thoughts of losing one for whom she felt the affection of a child, but knowing that it had long been the wish of Mr. and Mrs. Bruce to withdraw from the bustle of military life, she could not be so selfish as to repine.

"At the throne of grace we can always meet