

whose it was, I heard that Lord Avon, with his sister, Lady Frances Lumley, had just arrived, purposely to see Miss Milman. I had half a mind to call, only I thought they might think it strange, as we have not been there so long."

"How very extraordinary! I cannot understand it. But it is preposterous to suppose the visit can be intended for Emmeline Milman," said Mrs. Larkins, rising and ringing the bell. "I will order the barouche and drive to Miss Grosvenor's, for I have intended to call on her for some time. Lucy, do go and make yourself presentable; and Maria, call Mrs. Bustle to come to me." And the matron hurried from the room, while the girls looked at each other and giggled.

In another hour the trio reached the parsonage, but to their disappointment they found no carriage—no Lord Avon—no Lady Frances,—only quiet Miss Grosvenor sitting at work in her little front parlour. She rose on the entrance of Mrs. Larkins, expressing some surprise at seeing her.

"Indeed I have many apologies to make," replied the matron, accepting the offered chair; "but I am a shocking visitor,—my girls often tell me so. I hope your sweet charge, Miss Milman, is well; we wish so much to see her."

"Miss Milman is not at home at present," returned Miss Grosvenor, with some dignity.

"How very unfortunate; we came purposely to ask her if she would come tomorrow and spend a long day with us. We shall be quite alone, and it would make us so happy. Will you convey my message to her?"

"Certainly," replied Miss Grosvenor, "but I am afraid she will be unable to accept your invitation, as I grieve to say we are going to lose her for an indefinite period," and Miss Grosvenor brushed a tear from her eye as she said this.

"To leave you! dear me! Is she then going to take a situation? I thought it must come to that after all." And Mrs. Larkins pursed up her mouth.

"No, ma'am; my brother would never permit so young a creature as Emmeline to become a governess."

"Then, where can she be going?" said Mrs. Larkins, looking a little alarmed; "surely she is better off under your kind roof than with strangers?"

"Than with strangers, certainly; but Emmeline is going to friends—warm, affectionate friends,—with whom, I trust, she will be as happy as she deserves. Lady Frances Lumley, the sister of Lord Avon, has invited her to Fairy Hall, and she leaves us tomorrow."

Mrs. Larkins was unable to speak for several moments after receiving this intelligence. She then said:

"Good gracious! I was not aware that Miss

Milman was acquainted with Lady Frances Lumley."

"Nor was she until today, when they met as old friends, the warm interest felt for the dear girl by Lord Avon having influenced his sister in her favour, who is one of the sweetest creatures. Mr. Grosvenor is quite charmed with her. They have carried Emmeline away with them to dine at Carlton's, and she accompanies them home tomorrow. Sad'y shall we miss her, for hers has been quite an angel's visit to us."

The blank countenance of Mrs. Larkins expressed her chagrin, and feeling unable to disguise it, she abruptly rose, saying, with a forced smile, "Pray tell Miss Milman how much I regret not seeing her, though I rejoice at her good fortune!" She hesitated, and then added, "May I ask if you have heard anything more about Lord Avon's engagement to the Lady Barbara Guise?"

"Not a word," replied Miss Grosvenor, "nor can I believe it now."

The stress she laid upon the last monosyllable made Mrs. Larkins start, and turning to her daughters, who were whispering and laughing, she wished Miss Grosvenor a good morning, and departed, ordering her servants, in no very pleasing tone, to drive home. On her arrival there, her ill humour, called forth by the prosperity of another, was suddenly changed into agony, when Mr. Larkins placed letters in her hand, announcing the loss of a very valuable argosy at sea. * * * * *

And now the scene suddenly changes to Fairy Hall, the beautiful residence of Sir John Lumley, whither we beg our readers to follow us into the boudoir of Lady Frances, where, attired in an elegant negligé, she appeared reclining, on a rich damask ottoman, her brother, Lord Avon, carelessly sitting at her feet, playing with a large Persian cat. Very fair and lovely she looked, if, at least, a most sweet expression of countenance, rather than regularity of features, might be termed so. She possessed the same deep blue eyes of her brother—the same formed mouth and unrivalled teeth,—but while the colour of his hair was the darkest chestnut hers fell in flaxen ringlets, giving to her a more juvenile appearance than perhaps her years might claim. There was a life and joy beaming on her face, that seemed to say she was a stranger to sorrow, and which formed a striking contrast to the settled melancholy now too visible in his. Lady Frances was the indulged wife of a man fully twenty years older than herself, whom she had married when scarcely past girlhood, to escape from a home embittered to her by a despotic, harsh father. Two children, born a few years after her marriage, were hers—Clyde, the eldest, unhappily deformed and sickly in constitution; Norman, a noble looking boy, the idol of both his parents, and humoured