

desired. For my sake, be kind to Blanchard; I have sometimes indulged a wish which I dare not now express. Heaven bless you, I can write no more to day."

"And now, dear Mrs. Mary," continued the weeping Belinda; "I have confided to you all my cares. My father blamed me for not sooner acquainting him with the story of Harvey; and you may easily imagine how much my regret was increased, after reading my uncle's letter. Many were the tears it cost me, but I acted for the best—I did what I thought was right, and I left the consequences to God."

"And rest assured, my dear girl," I replied, affectionately embracing her as she ceased speaking; "you will not eventually go unrewarded by that gracious God—none ever made a sacrifice to duty and repented it. Have you ever heard any tidings of Captain Blanchard since his departure?"

"Only from the public papers; he is so light and volatile that he may long ere this have forgotten me, but stationary as I have been, wandering over all the same dear spots, and surrounded by a thousand reminiscences, his image remains fixed in my memory, in my heart; not, I trust, as it once did, to the neglect of higher duties, but as a cherished friend, for whom my humble prayers are constantly offered. Within the last week I have learnt that his regiment is again expected here immediately, previous to its embarkation for foreign service, and the agitation and conflicting feelings with which I reflect upon our meeting under such circumstances, I find a heavy trial. Most thankful am I that you are here, my dear Mrs. Mary, to strengthen me by your advice, and aid me by your experience, should my fortitude fail me."

"My sweet girl, rather place your entire dependence on the same blessed rock which has hitherto proved your support," I returned; "yet what poor help is mine to give, most freely shall you receive."

We remained conversing until the return of Mrs. Harrington and Marion from their party, warned us of the late hour, when we separated for the night, with mutual increased feelings of affection and friendship.

I descended to the breakfast parlour at a late hour on the morning following, when I found only Belinda and her sister; Mrs. Harrington not having yet made her appearance. Marion looked fatigued from her midnight revels, but appeared in charming spirits.

"I fear that I am a delinquent," said I. "Whose empty cup reproaches my idleness?"

"Only papa's," replied Belinda, smiling; "his morning engagements usually call him out early; I am going to send mamma's coffee to her room, so you have no need to accuse yourself."

"I almost envy your fresh looks this morning," Belinda, said her sister; "my head aches sadly

with the heat of the room last night; it was crowded to excess."

"I hope you found the ball a pleasant one, dear Marion."

"Oh, most agreeable, we had the band of the—regiment; I forgot to tell you that your Adonis, Captain Harvey Blanchard, was there. Nay, you need not start, and turn so pale; pray hand me my cup, child, else I shall lose my coffee, and I am quite longing for it."

Poor Belinda was indeed agitated by the intelligence.

"Did you speak to him Marion, do you know when he arrived?" she enquired in a faltering tone.

"Only the evening before, dear."

"And how does he look?"

"A most captivating creature, I can assure you; mamma was quite taken by surprise, she had always supposed your description overdrawn; but when he entered the room last night, the impression he made was quite extraordinary. Even the old ladies laid down their cards to gaze upon him, and I overheard the remark made by one: 'What a splendid young man, who can he be?' 'My dear,' replied the husband, who was her partner at whist; 'that is very strongly expressed, I do not see any thing so very remarkable in his appearance.' 'I dare say not, Mr. Tobin,' replied his lady, with some little asperity, 'heart is the trump card, my dear.' Then, had you seen the eagerness of the young ladies to be introduced to him, it would have made you quite jealous. Nor did he think it necessary to assume a brusque manner towards them, to show his indifference; he was courteous and affable to all. In the course of the evening he was presented to mamma, by whose side he remained a considerable time; she was so captivated with him, that she has invited him, with two other of the officers, to dine here to-morrow."

"Oh Marion, is it possible," exclaimed Belinda, clasping her hands, and resting her sweet face upon them; "would that I had been more prepared for this."

"What a silly girl you are—take care that I do not prove a dangerous rival, for I can assure you I waltzed with him, and made myself so charming, that he would scarcely leave me for any one else. Do not look so alarmed, my dear, for I have no ambition to become the slave of a bugle, or to be marched off at a moment's notice, heaven knows where. No, no, military men are delightful people in a ball room, but when the dim outline of the frigate is viewed in the distance, or worse still, some horrid old transport, with a leak in her, added to the terrible words "under orders" ringing in our ears; then reality, like Ithuriel's spear, dispels the enchantment, and the vain delusion vanishes."

"Marion, you are a light hearted being," said