

"Is there not a higher even than this, dear Harvey?"

"There may be, and it may yet be mine—press me not now on its merits, my own dearest; do you remember this?" and he drew from his bosom the little book, which she had given him on their first parting.

"Oh yes, well," replied Belinda, delighted to see that it had been so cherished; "have you read it?"

"I have, let that at present satisfy you."

Never had Belinda felt so happy as at this moment—her thoughts might be compared to that golden light which summer's eve loves to shed over hill and dale, as the declining sun wanes lower and lower, bright, beautiful, and full of promise for the morrow. Alas, why is it needful that shadows should pass over it, to darken and mar its splendour.

"Your five minutes are expired," said Mr. Harrington, re-entering, with his watch in his hand; "and that flushed cheek warns me that we may not extend them."

"This is indeed hard," replied Blanchard, rising; "Belinda love, do you consent to banish me thus?"

"Most unwillingly, dear Harvey; but we must comply with so necessary a mandate, for your health's sake. Alas, but for me, you would not have received this cruel wound."

"I can assure you it is nothing, and since you have cured the fever of my mind, none other may be feared. I shall return to you in a few days—come my fair guide, lead me forth," and he playfully rested his hand on her shoulder for support.

"Mine is but feeble help," said Belinda, smiling; "yet is it most readily bestowed."

"This is the more natural," returned Blanchard, releasing her, and then straining her to his bosom; "beloved confiding Belinda, thus should the tender ivy cling round the strong oak, and thus will I shield you from all the storms of life—farewell, my dearest girl."

The visit of Harvey Blanchard, under such interesting circumstances, was soon known throughout the house, and we all met him in the hall to greet him, as he was leaving it. Even Mrs. Harrington issued from her boudoir, and leant over the balustrade to express her pleasure at his amended strength; he raised his forage cap as he looked up and kissed his hand. The smile, the grace, which accompanied this simple action, appeared to win for him additional concern.

"Take care of yourself," said the lady; "we sadly want you amongst us again; I shall not send out cards for my intended ball, until you are quite recovered."

Mr. Harrington cordially pressed his hand, as he entered the carriage, apologising to Mr. Murray, his medical attendant, for having detained him.

"You have a fair excuse," replied his friend,

who had caught a view of Belinda's sweet anxious face, as she stood at the window; "but you must submit to a composing draught, after this wilful disregard of all rule."

"A truce with your rules, Master Murray," returned Blanchard, gaily; "I have hated them all since my school boy days, when the rule of three was my greatest enemy—*en avant*."

"And so you think to tame this wild hawk," said uncle Sam to Belinda, as the carriage drove from the door; "well, well, wisdom can never be personified by youth, that is certain; she must appear in her winter's garb, wrinkled and decrepit, and that is the reason why no one heeds her."

"Wisdom is from above, my uncle," replied Belinda softly, and taking his hand in hers; "and she is pure, gentle, easy to be entreated, without partiality, without hypocrisy, and this wisdom leads me to hope many things from one, for whom many prayers are offered."

"God bless thee, my girl," returned Captain Harrington, patting her fair cheek; "may thy hopes never be withered by untimely decay, or the blight of unkindness."

"My best hopes are not centered in aught that earth can yield," said Belinda; "else might I indeed expect bitter disappointment; they are garnered where none may rob me of them, but where they will shine brighter unto eternal day in my Father's kingdom."

Captain Harrington silently pressed her in his arms, while a tear stood in his eye; he brushed it hastily away, as if ashamed and angry at its intrusion—he then hurried past her, and left the house, to pay his accustomed visit to his frigate, which was undergoing the necessary repairs, to render her efficient for service.

A heavy care was now removed from the heart of Belinda, and her cheerfulness rose in proportion; it was delightful to me to witness her returning happiness, to listen to all her plans, her wishes for the future; though I confess at times I trembled when I reflected on what might be in store for her, placed under the guardianship of so young a man, whose religious principles were unfixed, whose moral rectitude, depending on its own strength, might be overthrown by the first gust of passion. Oh, that he possessed that saving knowledge of Christ, which would make him aware of the enormity of sin, which it required so costly a sacrifice to redeem from eternal condemnation. How would this kindle his affections, and purify every thought, every desire; how would he strive to shun, to hate all which caused the sufferings of his Divine benefactor, and love to cherish those qualities and follow those precepts which inculcate that the evil thought is sin, and the hatred of a brother, murder. Such must ever be the result of faith in Him, who to believe is life eternal, who to know is happiness; and if there