

Annesley deserves leave, but I should recommend him to pass a few hours on board each day, as repairs are going forward which it will advantage him to witness. *Au revoir*—I am habitually punctual—so notwithstanding your good natured permission to be otherwise, I shall be with you at twelve to-morrow.”

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CHAPTER XIX.

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“Let me persuade you to forbear awhile.”—HENRY VI.

After the return of our party from Government House, the General, after kissing his daughters, bade them good-night, whilst the young people drew their chairs around the drawing-room fire, for a chat. All had much to hear and to communicate. Drawn out by Isabella, Annesley entertained them with his adventures at greater length than he had detailed them to the General, but with the same cautious reserve on any subject which he thought might be painful to Mountmorris. It grew late, and as they lighted their bed-room candles, Mountmorris drew Alice aside.

“Will you promise me, dear Alice, that however strange my conduct may appear, you will not doubt me; for, circumstanced as I am, after what has passed this morning, I feel it my duty to be explicit. I long have dearly loved you—I seek not, nor indeed could I in honor receive a reciprocal avowal, should I be so happy as to have won your love. I shall hope the best; but should my suspicions become certainty, I shall not hesitate, painful as it may be, to tell you all. Good-night, dearest—whatever may betide, I shall never cease to love you fondly.”

“I promise you all you wish, dearest Edward, and hope, to whatever your fears point, you may be in error. Whatever may happen, you have my warmest sympathy—you have forbidden my saying more,” she added, blushing, and smiling through tears.

The breakfast party at the General’s seemed to him less mirthful than he had expected; yet, suspecting nothing, he attributed it to the late hours of the last night, succeeding to the confinement of a ship.

“You must, Alice, consider yourself under arrest; and, after eleven in the evening, confined to your room. Raking does not agree with you—you look pale and weary this morning, my girl; and need a few days rest after our voyage. Take a short drive after breakfast—Mountmorris and Annesley will be your esquires. I have an engagement which will prevent my accompanying you.”

“I fear, sir, I must deny myself the pleasure,” said Annesley, “great as it would be, you remember the condition on which