

forgotten in your virtues, even as the thorns are disregarded in the sweetness of the rose."

The door at this moment was opened, when Sir George and Lady Brereton entered, who were immediately followed by the remaining guests at the Abbey; the cheek of Beatrice betrayed confusion, but on the proud and lofty brow of her companion, who had drawn himself up to his fullest height, none but those who knew him well might trace that it was in his nature to yield to tender emotions, or be otherwise than he now appeared, stern, cold, and most repellant.

The time has now arrived when we must turn from these childish annals of our heroine, to behold her in the more responsible character of a wife. Willingly would we linger, for it is in fear and trembling that we proceed, but though it is pleasant to walk amidst flowers, under a bright and sunny sky; yet is it more useful for man to traverse the deep sea, and brave the storm, in search of wisdom and knowledge—thus with the Christian, who, though he is suffered to proceed awhile on his way, rejoicing and happy, yet when God sees that the blessings he has showered upon him, instead of leading his heart more nearly to himself (which they ought to do) only render him careless, presumptuous, and forgetful, he suddenly changes the scene; the sunshine fades away, darkness over-hadows him, while the tempest of affliction breaks over his devoted head; he pauses then in his career of folly; he reflects, or as scripture emphatically expresses it in the story of the Prodigal Son, "he comes to himself," as if recovered from some fearful mental delusion, bitterly does he then repent his past ingratitude, that he has suffered himself to be so ensnared by the dangerous fascinations of the world as to wander far from the home of his heavenly father; he looks around him, yet he sees no friend, no comfort near, and in despair he exclaims:

"I will arise and go to my Father, and will say, Father I have sinned against heaven; and against thee, and am no longer worthy to be called thy son," thus is the proud, rebellious one conquered; he seeks his God, he kneels, he prays, and received in love, he is pardoned.

Time rolled swiftly on, and the spring, the beautiful spring, had returned, with all its fresh sweet flowers, its hedgerows and hillocks green, when on one of the brightest mornings in the merry month of May, the gates of Annesley Park appeared thronged with gay and handsome equipages; white favours adorned the hats of the numerous attendants, on whose honest countenances beamed good humour and merriment, while within the mansion were assembled, those who had witnessed the bridal of Colonel Brereton and of Beatrice. The scene presented was one full of interest, happiness being strangely mingled with tears, and expressions of sorrow.

It had been the earnest wish of Mary, that at the altar in the little Parish Church, her sister should have knelt to breathe those words, which in her opinion, were so full of solemnity, but this was overruled with indignation, by Mrs. Annesley, who affirmed that her daughter's wedding should not be conducted like that of any tradesman's, or servant maid's, consequently a special license having been obtained, the ceremony took place in the drawing-room of her father's house. Mr. Mortimer feelingly and beautifully performing it; the temporary altar Mary had raised with exquisite taste, although many and bitter were the tears she shed over it ere her task was completed; none knew but herself the source from whence they sprang, that a blighted affection, and blighted hopes had cankered one of the tenderest and kindest of hearts. Nobly she strove against her feelings, and fervently she prayed for divine help to rise above them, yet when all was over, when she beheld Claude Brereton, the secretly beloved, now irrevocably united to another, when rising from his knees with his young bride, he turned to bestow on her a brother's first embrace, nature could endure no more; she shrank trembling from his touch, and covering her face with both hands, she wept tears of the keenest agony; for an instant he gazed on her astonished, but other thoughts crowding on his mind, he gave his hand to the lovely Beatrice, and led her to her mother, who amidst all the joy she felt at beholding her fondest hopes for her favourite child thus realized, yet lamented that the hour had come when she was to be taken from her, never more to return, but as a visitor in her paternal home. She gazed on the radiant creature as she stood by the side of her proud husband, all her sportive gaiety for the time being awed by the solemnity of the scene, until her sight became dimmed by her tears. Again and again, she folded her in her arms, calling her by the most endearing epithets, and imploring Colonel Brereton to be kind to her, never to breathe a harsh word, or thwart her in any of her wishes, all of which injunctions he answered by a smile, while Mr. Annesley said:

"Pshaw, Maria, do not be so silly, the child will be far better away from you than ever she has been with you; you know that you have humoured and indulged her until she has nothing left to wish for. Brereton, my friend, take my advice, commence by having your own way from this day, else you may bid adieu to it for ever; I speak from sad experience."

"Thank you, sir," replied Colonel Brereton, laughing. "I shall not fail to follow such good counsel when I find it necessary, depend."

These words caused a pang in the breast of Mrs. Annesley, and could a look have killed, the one she cast on her husband, would certainly have had that effect; but in truth, poor man, he had some cause for the caution he had given, for Mrs. Annesley had