

she felt that with earthly hopes, and earthly ties, she should soon have nought more to do. But yet with these convictions, the happiness of others ceased not to awaken her interest, and with earnest desire she hoped that Arthur might in time transfer his interest to one, who, unmasked, had given him the fond and full affections of her pure and loving heart. This secret, which the shrinking Grace unconsciously treasured even from herself, Cecilia, by a thousand trivial signs, had long since discovered; and, believing that a purer, brighter, gentler spirit, never animated human clay, nor one more formed for Mayburne's happiness, she strove by many quiet acts to turn his thoughts from herself, and fix them on her young and lovely friend.

And this, perhaps, not one in that little home circle, lived and thought so much for others, during this brief and anxious summer, as did Cecilia. One would almost have believed she read the hearts of those she loved by an intuitive power, so quickly did she anticipate their wishes, penetrate their fears, and, by her cheerful words, suggest some thought to change them into hope. Day by day her perceptions seemed to grow brighter and clearer; her face wore a more celestial beauty, and her thoughts, her language were pure and melodious as the breathings of an angel; so sweetly serious, and yet so full of tenderness and love, that her fond grandmother, as she watched her meek and slow deeny, and listened to her gentle utterance, often said with tears:

"Ah, my child, were it not for this frail and beautiful body in which we behold you, we should feel as if a spirit only dwelt among us."

And so passed on the season—and to Arthur never had one seemed to pass so swiftly before. But as it waned, even he was forced to see that Cecilia's strength waned with it, that her step grew more languid, her breath, after the slightest exertion came quick and labored, and the tones of her voice deepened into the lowest and most touching melody. Yet still, with resolute self-deception, he closed his eyes to the fatal truth, and looked forward with vain hope to the cool and bracing air of autumn, as a certain means of restoring strength and vigor to her exhausted frame. And so he told her, when, one golden day in the beginning of September, he found her sitting alone on a favorite garden-seat, that was placed before a vista, through which were visible in beautiful perspective the quiet river, and the rich landscape, sleeping in the soft and hazy light, which touches with mellowed beauty the glory and the gorgeousness of autumn. She silently shook her head in reply to his suggestion, and then he gently chid her for her want of faith, spoke of the mind's power over the body, and

said how fatally, in many instances, a predetermination to believe in danger, had produced the fatal result, which might have been averted by a resolute desire and purpose to resist it. She heard him to an end, and then with calm seriousness replied,

"Do not think, Arthur, that I can see the ties which still bind me but too strongly to earth, severed without emotion. If it were God's will, I should yet desire life, were it only that I might soothe and sustain the age of her, who, in my orphanage and helplessness, nurtured me with such tenderness. But I cannot mistake the monitions which tell me it must be otherwise. And why should I repine at this? Nature submits in all things to her maker's will—even now, deeny and death are written in lines of beauty on the frail and perishing things around us, and yet all return gently and without resistance to the elements of which they were composed."

"And it is a law of their being, Cecilia, that they should do so when their appointed time, for which there is a marked and visible period, arrives—and this without help or remedy, which it would be vain to use, when, as we know, they have fulfilled the purposes of their creation, and, according to immutable laws, must perish. Man, too, has an appointed time to die,—but we know not—unless like yonder ripened wheat, he has reached his utmost maturity, accomplished his span of threescore years and ten, and stands, waiting for the sickle of the great reaper, to gather him to an immortal harvest—when that time has arrived. And therefore are we bound to use all human means to prolong the existence God has given, till the irrevocable fiat has gone forth, and the earth from which we sprang, receives us again in kindness to her all-embracing arms."

"True, dear Arthur—but when all that skill and love can do, have been essayed in vain to bring back health and vigor to the unstrung frame, becomes it not apparent that it is our Father's will to dissolve the frail body, and recall the immortal spirit which He gave, to its higher and happier home in heaven? And should there come gloom and sadness with this thought? Ah, rather let the soul clothe itself in robes of solemn joy and gladness, for the change to glory which awaits it! let it trust in God's goodness, and remain firm, and even in the parting moment, it may resign itself gently as yonder falling leaf, to Him whose love watches the lonely sparrow, and feeds the hungry ravens when they cry."

"Such a soul as yours, Cecilia," said Arthur with emotion, "may plume its wings with joy, for a flight to its native heaven—but, alas, for those whom its departure will leave desolate!—desolate, and mourning for the serene and gentle