

"And now what shall we do to beguile this long day, Annie," I asked gaily, when she re-entered, "shall we pay a visit to Martha, and see if she is reinstated in her little possessions—she told us she had a sick child, she may still require our aid."

"How kind in you to think of her," replied Annie, "what could make me forget; let us go directly."

Our walk was very pleasant, through green woods and shady lanes. We found Martha sitting at her cottage door, attired in all neatness, and singing most merrily as she was busy at her needle—her little boy sat beside her reading.

"Dear Miss Annie, can I ever speak my thanks," said the grateful creature, as she rose at our approach, "see how beautiful our cottage looks—God forever bless the dear gentleman, and you, for bringing such a friend in our hour of need. My child too quite well—have I not cause for gratitude? He came again the day after you had been here, and when he saw my boy so pale in his bed, he desired me to send for a doctor at his expense, and not a day has passed that he has not come to see him, or sent his servant to know what we wanted. My husband says he ought to be a prince."

"He is a good Christian, which is far better," replied Annie, while tears glistened in her eyes. "Was he here yesterday?" she enquired timidly.

"No, Miss Annie, but his servant came, and he told me that his master expected to leave D — to-morrow or the next day, owing to some letters he had received."

Annie started and turned very pale. "Do you think he will call again?" she asked.

"He did not say, miss, but I hope he may, for I should like to thank him once more for all he has done."

"Is not that Captain Selby approaching," I said, as a tall figure appeared in the distance. It was indeed him—and Annie's countenance instantly lighted up and resumed its own animated expression, which was however checked as he approached, on beholding him attired in deep mourning.

The innocent joy she displayed as he entered, would have flattered any one, save the humble minded man to whom it was shown. She upbraided him for not having fulfilled his promise—and "how lonely she had felt, and how much we had all missed him—but I fear," she continued, glancing at his dress, "that you have had some painful cause for your absence."

For one instant, a gleam of gladness crossed his face as he gazed on hers—he took her hand, but as quickly let it fall.

"It has been from a painful cause," he replied, gravely, "and I was even now on my way to your house to say farewell, and to offer my warm thanks to your excellent father, for all his kind attentions."

"Are you then really going," enquired Annie, in

a faltering tone, as her hand slightly rested on the back of a chair for support—the agitation of her beautiful features could not escape his notice.

"Can that in the smallest degree affect you?" was his enquiry in the lowest tone, while his whole frame seemed convulsed with some violent emotion.

Annie looked at him—her eyes were filled with tears—"Surely yes, are you not my father's friend,—my friend?"

This answer fell coldly on his ear, and a blank look of disappointment succeeded.

I had, during their short dialogue, drawn the attention of Martha to some trifling remarks about herself, but my whole attention was given in reality to my friends. I now approached them, when Annie, turning to me, mentioned the intended departures of Captain Selby, adding, "shall we not all miss him sadly?"

"I can answer at least for *one*," I replied; "if it were not for making you vain, Captain Selby, I would tell you that you have completely spoiled this young lady—and that it is fortunate for her that you are going away. She has been a perfect idler within the last few days—but for your books, which have been her only amusement, her only companion in her solitary hours, I know not how she would have redeemed herself from the imputation. As for poor me, when she found that none else were left to her this day, she bitterly lamented her hard lot."

Captain Selby smiled—"is that the case Annie," he enquired, "have I been so missed?"

Annie would have answered, but her cheek became blanched, and she burst into a flood of tears. The sudden start, and look of astonishment given by Captain Selby, were such as to excite extreme sympathy—he drew her arm within his, and immediately led her to the door of the cottage.

"Annie, where is your father—is he not at home?" was his enquiry, in a tone of much agitation.

"No indeed," replied poor Annie, "nor do I expect him until the evening."

"Then I may only walk with you to your gate—that pleasure may at least be mine for the last time."

We took leave of Martha, who would have been profuse in her acknowledgments, as she was in her curtsies, but we hurried away—Captain Selby merely saying slightly to her; "you shall hear from me again."

We lingered on our road home, and I appeared to be particularly desirous of collecting all the wild flowers in our path, which took some time to arrange. My companions, however, did not appear impatient—there was a tenderness in Captain Selby's manner, whenever he addressed Annie, which I had not marked before—and the intense interest with which she listened to every word that fell from his lips, could not but be flattering. His conver-