

of Harvey Blanchard—your attachment to each other is evident; nor does it surprise me. This morning I conversed with him a long time about you, when he confided to me the state of his affections, and urged my consent for your union."

Belinda now became extremely agitated.

"My dearest father," she said, throwing herself on his bosom, "I cannot deny my attachment for Harvey. You have long known in what manner it was first called forth; but I am not prepared for this sudden announcement. He cannot expect me to decide so hastily. Tell me, oh tell me, how you answered him?"

"I told him what I now repeat to you," returned Mr. Harrington, affectionately; "that I could not consent to part lightly with such a daughter; that he must leave the army ere my consent could be gained."

"And what said he to that, my father?"

"He explained to me his circumstances," replied Mr. Harrington; "which were sufficiently satisfactory to me, considering your unambitious views; but he added that his honour required him to go abroad with his regiment, as it was supposed to be for active service, and that not even to gain you would he hold back at such a moment."

"He is right, quite right," returned Belinda, while a noble enthusiasm sparkled in her eye; "and I love him the more for such a sentiment. Go on, my father?"

"I expressed my approbation," returned Mr. Harrington; "at the same time I said that I could not agree to expose a child so tenderly reared as you had been, to the uncertainties inseparable from the life of a soldier, and that he must be patient until a few more years were passed; but patience appears not a quality much understood by my friend Blanchard. He became so distressed, so agitated, that I was fearful of evil consequences in his condition, and I begged him to postpone the conversation for the present; but he continued to urge his plea with such eloquence, that I was at length compelled reluctantly to say that if it was *your* wish to be united to him previous to his departure, I would yield mine to your decision."

"Can I have a wish, my father, which would oppose itself to yours," said Belinda, kneeling, while the expression of an angel's shone upon hers. "Oh, no, no; all I desire is to perform my duty. Let me only feel certain where this lies, and if the way were all dark before me, I should have no fear to follow it, with God's arm to shield, His spirit to guide me."

"My excellent child," replied her father, clasping her in his embrace; "well do I know that such are your sentiments, and to see your religion so consistently and beautifully enforced by your practice, does indeed incline me more towards it. But tell me truly, Belinda, the strength of your feelings towards Blanchard. Fear not to confide in your father.

Are they sufficient to carry you through dangers, through difficulties, for his sake—your answer will not be given in the spirit of a silly, romantic girl, whose vivid imagination pictures happiness in privation, which is never realized—but it will come from a heart impressed with the importance of those risks you engage to share with one who may repay you by ingratitude and neglect and unkindness?"

"My dearest father, I well know that if I were to go forth with Harvey, unblessed by you, and against your expressed desire, that I should meet nothing but misery, disappointment, and remorse—for how can that child dare to expect happiness, who wilfully breaks the high commands of God, and abandons her parents' home; but with your approval gained, I confess that the debt of gratitude which I now owe to him, has so added to my former feelings, that I would follow him through any dangers, any sufferings, even unto death."

A short silence ensued, during which Mr. Harrington paced the room, while his countenance expressed deep anxiety. He then approached her, saying:

"Belinda, I faithfully promised Blanchard that I would not influence you; but oh, my child, I scarcely expected your answer would be thus given. Have you weighed the consequences of such a resolve?"

"I have prayed earnestly for Divine guidance, my father," replied Belinda; "I have endeavoured to view the probable results, and I think I should not act wrongly in giving my hand to him, who watched over the dying bed of my beloved uncle, as a son, whose kindness soothed the last days of my own dearest grandmamma, and who has risked himself and endangered his own life to save mine."

"These are powerful incentives, certainly, in his favour, and have had their due weight with me; yet how can I part with you, Belinda, to be carried I know not where, to encounter I know not what, and with so short a time to prepare me."

Never had the feelings of Mr. Harrington been drawn forth so strongly before. Belinda was surprised and distressed. She pressed his hands in hers as she replied:

"Your heart goes not with your consent, my father, nor shall it be extorted from you; I will never leave you thus—and bursting into a violent flood of tears, she threw herself into his extended arms—"I was peaceful and contented before he returned," she continued, sobbing; "and so I shall become again after a while. It will be a heavier trial to part with him this time; but God will support me under it, and I shall return to all my duties, and be your own cheerful Belinda again, if you will only bear with me and have patience." And she tried to smile.

The more Mr. Harrington gained an insight into the beauties of Belinda's character, the greater was