

large upon the subject of Sir Edward Selby's late unexpected acquisitions. It appeared that his paternal uncle, the son of a second marriage, and not older than himself, had squandered much of his wealth in gambling, and in the pleasures of the chase. He had united himself with a person much beneath him in rank, who in presenting him with a son and heir, rendered the idea of Captain Selby's ever attaining the family title very improbable. He had kept up no intercourse with a relation, whose habits and tastes were so dissimilar to his own—consequently the surprise he experienced on learning his demise, was much increased by the discovery that he had left no child to succeed him. His son, a young man of nineteen years, addicted to the same pursuits as his father, having been unfortunately killed by a fall from his horse, while out hunting—thus leaving Captain Selby the possession of a title and fortune which his merits so justly deserved. Most kindly and generously did he provide for the widow of his uncle—who found in him a friend ready to advise and to act, and console her, as far, as lay in his power, for the cares and sorrows of her past life. She removed to her own relations, into a distant part of the country, while he retained those servants whom he considered worthy, and prepared Blackhurst Castle for the reception of his young bride, intrusting only to Mr. Bertram and to Lord Randolph the knowledge of his rank.

On the third day after we had quitted L——, we approached the gates of a handsome and venerable pile of building, well placed off the road, and in the centre of a fine park—with an avenue of broad elms leading up to the house.

"And is my lowly Annie lady of this domain," said Mr. Bertram, as he leaned from the window of the carriage, to catch a view of the place. "God grant that prosperity may not lead away her young affections from its best treasures."

The lodge gates were opened by our friend Martha, who, with her husband and child, had been placed there by Sir Edward, in order to agreeably surprise Annie on her arrival. Many were the smiles and curtsies with which she greeted us. The father's heart beat quick as we drew up to the entrance, where Sir Edward and Lady Selby stood awaiting our approach. In a moment, she was clasped in the paternal embrace, while her expressions were: "My own beloved papa, now I am indeed perfectly happy. Oh, never, never, must we be again parted, even for a day," spoke at once the true state of her feelings. Most affectionately was I also welcomed, and we passed through the handsome hall into a drawing room, exquisitely furnished—where choice exotics from a conservatory, sent their fragrant perfumes through doors of stained glass.

"I have a charge to prefer against this young lady," said Sir Edward, who with his arm fondly

thrown round his beautiful wife, led her up to her father; "for several days past, since your letter announced when we might expect you, has she been totally idle. I have tried in vain to gain her attention, and to take her to see several objects of interest in the neighbourhood, but my answer always was, 'wait till my dear father comes, when we will enjoy it the more.' I assure you, I was half tempted to send the culprit home again—but somehow I felt that her presence was too necessary—and that to live without her now would be impossible."

"It would be impossible, my dear sir," replied Mr. Bertram, gazing delightedly on the glowing, happy countenance of his child, as she looked up most affectionately on her excellent husband, while he was speaking; "I have tried it, and even for your sake I scarcely think I could have made the sacrifice—I humbly thank God it is not necessary—may we strive to deserve His mercies."

After partaking of some refreshments, we were carried from room to room, by Annie, who was charmed to show us all the improvements made by Sir Edward—there was her own boudoir containing every thing she most prized and admired, opening over to a balcony on a verdant lawn, beautifully shaded by trees; and stored with a small collection of well chosen books—here her private devotional hours were spent; she then took us to Sir Edward's library, a splendid room, where he smilingly affirmed he could never enter to write; or to study, and to forget that such a young lady was in existence, without her stealing in and sitting down by his side, when immediately his book or papers, would be cast aside, he knew not how, and she alone listened to, and attended.

"These are grave charges, my child," said Mr. Bertram, stroking her fair brow, on which clustered in rich ringlets her beautiful hair, "but I fear another is more to blame than you are." The next room to this was the one destined for Mr. Bertram's study and arranged as much like his own in the parsonage as possible.

"This was all done before I came," said Annie, anxious that Sir Edward should gain the whole credit of this pleasing attention, "and your new Rectory, Papa, which is within two minutes walk through the grounds," she continued, is perfectly beautiful. Your mornings you may devote there when you like, but your evenings always here, remember. And now I will show you to your own apartments that you may rest before dinner, else, in my desire to show you every thing at once I shall tire you.

In the evening, we strolled through the rich and tasteful grounds which were still improving under the superintendence of Sir Edward, several tenants were scattered in pretty cottages round the estate, who had reason to be grateful for the new master placed over them; as for Annie she was never tired