

"Yes, you were indeed intimate," replied Mrs. Dalton, "but I always thought Clarissa too romantic, and her imprudent marriage proved it."

"I remember," said Mr. Dalton, a fine looking man of about fifty years of age, "when she was first introduced into society, a beautiful girl truly, and one calculated to win admiration wherever she went. I can scarcely wonder at her father's anger, at marrying so far beneath her."

"Was there anything against the young man, except his poverty?"

"He was not her equal in station. Her father, as the younger son of a noble family, expected his daughter to marry a gentleman of rank, but instead of that, she refused several eligible offers, and accepted a shopkeeper."

"But papa," persisted Belinda, "was there anything against his character?"

"Oh, no; had his station and means been equal to her's, he would have been an excellent match, for few could surpass him, physically or mentally."

"I saw him several times after his marriage," said Lavinia, "walking with Clarissa, and I thought then, I had seldom seen a handsomer couple."

"He published some poems in one of our papers, under a fictitious signature," chimed in Charles, "which were generally admired. I wonder what has become of the poor things. I do not think they reside here still."

"I made frequent inquiries, but never could obtain a satisfactory answer, for you know all her fashionable friends forsook her, on her marrying, as they expressed it, beneath her. This note, however, has dissipated the secrecy which apparently attended her movements. It is from her, and she begs me, if I have not entirely forgotten the friendship which formerly subsisted between us, to call and see her. I am afraid she is in great distress, judging by the manner in which she writes."

"But where does she reside, Belinda?"

"In Irish Town, two doors south of Mr. Winton's grocery store."

"Do you intend going?" said Alice.

"Yes, surely, this very afternoon."

"I do not know why you need do so. I am sure I pity her very much, but, for all that, would not venture into