

as our friend Harvey does whenever a shadow crosses your fair face—who dares to weep on a day like this ?”

“Alas, dear Mrs. Mary, I have cause to weep,” replied Belinda; “Bertha has just been here, and tells me that she fears Lindsay is seriously ill; he has been confined to his bed for two days. I wondered that he had not been to see us.”

“This is indeed sad news,” I returned, much concerned; “he has been looking ill for the last fortnight. Is there any one attending him ?”

“She says not—I have just been sending him some nice jelly, and kind uncle Sam has gone at my request to see him. I hate the thoughts of the ball now; how I wish it were over.”

“My dear girl, be comforted,” I said, “a few hours will see the ball over, and tomorrow we will walk with your uncle to the parsonage. Bertha, you know, is an anxious creature, and soon takes the alarm.”

“I trust it may be so,” replied Belinda, sorrowfully; “but she tells me he looks so anxiously at little Gertrude, and last night he said to her: ‘poor child, who will take care of you when Lindsay is gone?’ and the dear creature answered him by another touching question: ‘who takes thought for the Hiles of the field, my Lindsay?’ Dear excellent Lindsay, Gertrude shall be my child, if ever she is deprived of your gentle guardianship.”

I thought as she uttered this, her whole soul beaming in her expressive eyes, how far away she might herself be in a little time, but I expressed not my thoughts to her.

The ball room was thrown open at the appointed hour; the band of the — regiment were stationed in the conservatory, all looked brilliant, gay, and beautiful. I assisted to dress dear Belinda, and very lovely she appeared in my sight; but as I marked the pensive expression in her sweet face, I feared that Blanchard would be disappointed.

Mrs. Harrington’s energies revived wonderfully this evening—it was marvellous to witness the little fatigue she displayed while standing for hours receiving her guests—but she was sustained by the praises, the flatteries, the compliments which flowed from each as she received them, with smiles and words, courteous and bland. Marion, superbly dressed, and hanging on the arm of Baron Feldbach, seemed to afford her infinite delight, for her eyes followed them wherever they moved—I had never beheld her so animated, but then I had seen her only in the domestic circle, and there she cared not to shine—the world, the gay world, was the idol of her idolatry, the shrine at which she knelt.

Mrs. Fortescue and her party were amongst the latest arrivals. She entered, escorted by the handsome Harvey Blanchard, and accompanied by Mr. Fortescue and a few other gentlemen—she looked most supremely happy. A slight shade passed

over Belinda’s face on beholding them, but she checked it instantly as she advanced to meet them. It would have been natural, I thought, had Mrs. Fortescue now withdrawn from Blanchard, but instead of this, she scarcely waited to receive Belinda’s greeting, but coldly addressing her, led him away to the other end of the room, and in a few minutes afterwards they were seen dancing together. Blanchard nodded to Belinda on perceiving her, but I scarcely think she observed it. She stood for one moment with her eyes fixed on the ground, alone and silent, then glided from the spot apart from all. How well could I enter into the feelings of her young and sensitive heart. I was standing near Captain Blanchard and his partner when the dance had concluded, and I overheard her remark:

“How very well Miss Harrington is looking to-night, what a contrast there is between her and her sister; the one all life and happiness, the other moping melancholy—I always termed them ‘day’ and ‘night.’”

Blanchard bit his lip at the remark, but made no answer.

“Only observe Belinda,” continued Mrs. Fortescue; “she looks as sad as if she were going to attend a funeral—I suppose she considers herself so wicked for mixing in this scene of vanity, that she dare not be gay.”

Blanchard turned in the direction where Belinda stood—she was conversing with Captain Harrington, and her features certainly wore a sad expression. Suddenly she looked up, and beheld whose eyes were fixed upon her—how instantly did her countenance change, and how beautiful was the smile which she bestowed upon him. Most warmly did he return it.

“Do lead me into the next room,” said Mrs. Fortescue; “this is so intolerably oppressive,” and they moved away.

The moment he was relieved from his charge of the lady, he went in search of Belinda. As he moved through the crowd, his remarkably handsome form attracted universal observation, and many a wistful glance was cast upon him, as the band again commenced playing, he perceived Marion, and approached her, enquiring for her sister.

“Heaven knows where she is,” replied Marion; “she was sitting in yonder window a little while since, looking the very image of woe.”

“What makes her so sad tonight,” asked Blanchard, impatiently; “I left her all gaiety yesterday.”

“Aye, but you forget that you have proved a recreant knight this day, and, came not to your appointment,” replied Marion, holding up her finger in a chiding manner, “and then instead of attending your lady love, as you were in duty bound to do, your allegiance was ceded to the pretty Mrs. For-