


CHAPTER VI.

 ISABEL was to spend this Xmas with the Morningtons, who with the exception of Harry, were to return to Europe in February. It was very rough weather, and Isabel had much such a journey as that to Elm Grove, and was in a very similar condition to what she had been on that occasion. On her arrival at Eastwood, Ada embracing her exclaimed "Oh! here you are at last my own darling Isabel, I have been watching for you all day, papa was sadly afraid of accidents this stormy weather, and Bob kept bringing such dreadful accounts of trains being snowed up, that he nearly frightened me to death. Papa has been to the depot three times, and Harry twice, and missed you after all. But do come and warm yourself dearest, for you seem half frozen," she continued as she hurried Isabel into the cosy little breakfast-room, where the bright fire was indeed a pleasant sight on such a bitterly cold day.

"We met with several disagreeable stoppages, but nothing worse" replied Isabel, her teeth chattering with cold. "I am sadly chilled with this piercing wind, Oh! this is nice" she added going to the fire, "and it is so very pleasant to be at 'Eastwood' once more."

"Why here is Isabel I declare," cried the impulsive Lucy, as she bounded into the room, "how delightful, you will help me to arrange the gim-cracks on the Xmas tree, won't you my pet," said the merry girl as she threw her arms round her friend, and hugged her unmercifully.

"To be sure I will, when I recover the use of my fingers," returned Isabel laughing.

"Well, I don't want you to come now, for if I am a little mad-cap as papa says, I'm not quite so unreasonable as that," Lucy answered, seating herself upon an ottoman. "Here I am your humble servant to command what orders for your slave, most noble Isabel of Leicester. You have but to speak and I obey."