

when we tease her, and if I had torn her dress as I did Miss Morley's this morning, she would not have sent me away crying—would you, sissy dear?"

"Yes, Kate, if you had been naughty," returned Clara, striving by a sign to silence the clamorous little group, and bending down her lovely face, so as almost to hide it in the clustering ringlets of the child.

"No, you would not—would she be cross, cousin Charles?" and the persevering little questioner appealed to Castleton, who at that moment crossed the apartment towards her.

"Never, Kate, her nature is all sweetness," he answered in a fervent tone, and taking the little creature from Clara's arms, he pressed her fondly in his own.

Glad to make her escape, Clara glided away towards the sofa, where Grace still reclined—but this little scene had not produced a very amiable effect upon her temper—she saw that the children's remarks were not lost upon Charles, and she was excessively annoyed to have Clara represented to him, in a light so much more attractive than herself. Clouds overshadowed her bright and beautiful brow, and when Clara, hoping to turn her thoughts into a pleasant channel, spoke of the pic-nic, and kindly asked her if she would like to join the excursion, she coldly replied:

"That if her head continued to ache as it did then, she should be incapable of any enjoyment, and sit only for her pillow—but she begged not to interfere with the plans of others, or be the means of marring any one's pleasure, especially that of the children, by detaining Clara from them, who seemed—" and her lip slightly curled, "to be so essential to their happiness."

"They would certainly prefer my accompanying them," said Clara, with her accustomed gentleness of tone and manner; "but even little Kate is old enough to sacrifice her wishes unrepiningly to the comfort of others, and I doubt not, all of them will abundantly enjoy the day, even should I remain at home, which I shall cheerfully do, unless you are able and inclined to join the party. But let me do something for your head, dear Grace; I will send these noisy children away, and bathe it in eau de Cologne, and I doubt not it will be quite well to-morrow."

"Let me kiss you before I go, sister," said Kate, stooping down from Castleton's arms, who stood by holding her in silence, and stretching out her dimpled hands towards Clara. The embrace was given and returned, and as she slid down to go away, she cast an arch glance at Grace, and roguishly plucking the rose from her hair, threw it at Charles, and ran laughing from the room. Miss Morley started and endeavoured to smile, but it was plain to see how much she was annoyed by the wild freedom of the artless child. But her fair face assumed a more

complacent expression, when Charles, as though it were a precious deposit, placed the stolen flower in his bosom, and finding herself again the sole object of thought and attention, her animation and good humour by degrees returned. Charles sat on a low ottoman assiduously fanning her, while Clara's little soft hand bathed her temples with eau de Cologne, and thus ministered to, and amused, she became once more the brilliant and fascinating beauty, whose faults were lost in the assumed sweetness of her manners and disposition, or forgotten in the charm of her varied and lively conversation.

The following morning dawned bright and cloudless, and the gay voices and busy feet of the children were heard from their apartment, even before the shrill note of chanticleer proclaimed its approach. Miss Morley too, rose with renovated health and spirits, declaring herself well enough to join the pic-nic, and looked forward with much pleasure to the promised enjoyments of the day. She wished to go on horseback, and Charles and Clara, who were experienced equestrians, gladly acceded to the proposal. Mr. and Miss Grey, some friends of Clara's, also rode with them, while Mr. and Mrs. Ilsley, with Mrs. Darracot and her sister, occupied one carriage, and the children of the two families, with their nurses, the other. It was still early when the party set out, and Mr. Grey, who was an admirer of Clara's, immediately attached himself to her, nor could she avoid feeling wounded, at the willingness with which her cousin Charles yielded her entirely to his care. For himself, he seemed completely fascinated by Miss Morley, and beautiful indeed she looked, as gracefully she managed her high spirited steed, and bent her bright glowing face gaily towards Castleton, conversing as she rode with unaffected ease and vivacity.

"Could I be thus absorbed by another," thought Clara, "and he within hearing of my voice?" and a pang shot through her heart as she asked herself the question. "Oh, man knows nothing of the intensity and fervour of that sentiment which springs up in the heart of woman—nothing of its self devotion, its concentration of thought and feeling and purpose—looking with fond desire but to one end, circumscribing its enjoyments and hopes within one magic circle, which however limited it may be, is broad enough for the wide expansion of those tender sympathies and emotions that constitute her felicity."

Such were the thoughts of Clara Ilsley, as she contrasted her lover's conduct with what would have been her own, under similar circumstances. But her's was a well disciplined mind, fortified by principles, that could alone sustain her under life's many and varied trials, and which enabled her gratefully to enjoy the blessings of her lot, even if deprived of one dear and cherished source of happi-