

forward to meet her, and was received in her embrace, tears bedewing her cheeks.

"From my heart do I sympathise in your happiness, this morning, my sweet Amy," said this amiable young woman; "I heard the voice of my brother, and I would not enter to disturb you. His words reached me not, but I can conjecture their import, and may the hopes of both be fully realised."

"Dear, dear Emily, how kind, how considerate," replied Amy affectionately, returning her caress; but there is no joy without its shadow—you have not heard *all*," and she paused, dreading to unfold the tale of Susan Gray."

"Yes, my dear girl, I have heard all," returned Lady Emily, pressing her hand over her eyes. "My best of mothers came to me at an early hour this morning, and gently informed me of the loss of my little pet child. You need not have withheld it from me, yesterday, my Amy, when much additional pain would have been spared you; for how can I regret the dear lamb, when her earthly lot promised so little. Murray," she continued to the maid who now entered, "carry that basket of work to dame Gray's cottage, and tell her all I desired you; I am anxious to touch her heart by every possible means, while it is softened, and I think that must tend to do so. You are surprised to see me so undisturbed, Amy, but added to the strength I have obtained in prayer, are repeated disappointments, and the blight of many hopes, which have been salutary lessons, and have led me to place my happiness on things beyond the reach of mortality."

"You remind me more of my dear guardian than any one I know," said Amy, "how I wish."

"Amy, forbear," quickly interrupted Lady Emily, "or you will inflict a wound you little intend. Whose is this interesting miniature?" she continued, after a brief pause, and sitting down on the couch lately occupied by Lord Blondeville, and upon which still lay the open casket.

"It is my mother," replied Amy, "taken in her early youth, and, I have been told, was a faithful likeness."

"What mind, what amiability are here portrayed," said Lady Emily, gazing with interest on the delicate lineaments; "it is not like you, and yet the same pensive expression which I have occasionally remarked in you, is here most sweetly traced. Oh, no—such a creature as this could never be forgotten," and she gently laid it down, adding, "has Mr. Martyn ever seen it?"

"Oh yes, frequently, when I was at the castle."

"And did he not show much emotion?"

"No, he would view it with interest, but most calmly—once, I think, a tear fell upon it, but he brushed it away hastily, ere he returned it to me."

"His mind is indeed most happily regulated," returned Lady Emily, "nor do I think one link has

power to bind the thoughts of that holy man to earth, save the one which attaches him to you and Harold; he conversed with me a long time about you both, after you left the room last night; he was much distressed on your account, and at the depression he observed in you all the evening."

"Emily, there is one thing I should much like to know," said Amy—"can you tell me who persuaded your brother to believe that my walks with Sir Charles Courtenay, alone, were not unusual?"

"It was from Miss Courtenay that he first learnt you were absent, on his arrival—but I think, or wish to think, that, in his disappointment and impatience, he misunderstood her as to its being not unusual—for, when he entered this room to see me, he was considerably agitated, nor could I calm him—he would not stay to listen to me, but instantly retired to his own. Yes, good and kind as this dear brother is, Amy, yet impatience is his fault, and I cannot think you were under the same roof with him for so many weeks, without discovering this. All his actions are from impulse, happily the noble generosity of his nature counteracts the evil this might prove, and the mild, well timed expostulations of Mr. Martyn, never fail in their influence over him. Beloved Harold," she affectionately continued, "he is indeed a fine noble minded being, nor is there one, save yourself, to whom I could behold him united, with the same heartfelt peace and satisfaction, since your deep and sincere piety, your gentleness and yielding disposition will so beautifully blend and harmonise with his more lively qualities."

How differently did the evening of this day pass to the preceding one. Amy confided to her beloved Mrs. Somerville the interview she had held with Lord Blondeville, and received her warm congratulations, and the reception she experienced from the estimable Countess when they met, was such as to most truly gratify her feelings, since it convinced her that she fully shared in the wishes of her son, and gave her entire concurrence.

With what a happy heart, and light boyant step did she descend to the saloon when the party were assembled before dinner. At the foot of the staircase she was met by the Earl and Mr. Martyn, who were walking together in the hall. She held out a hand to each, but inclined towards her guardian, who tenderly folding her to his bosom, said:

"This is for 'Auld Lang Syne,' is it not, my beloved child?" then placing the hand he held, in one of the Earl's, he pressed them in both his, uttering at the same time this benediction:

"May the Almighty God bless you both, and shed the rich mercies of his grace abundantly upon you, leading you safely through the snares and temptations of this life, to the eternal mansions of glory, in a better one to come. And now," he con-