

tears gushed forth. The stranger looked distressed, but remained silent; at length she started up, saying:

"I beg your pardon for detaining you; if you will kindly wait here, I will go to grandmama, and then return to you—what name am I to announce?"

"Captain Blanchard, Harvey Blanchard," repeated the stranger, who accompanied her to the door, where he remained watching her light graceful figure as she retreated.

Most gently and cautiously did Belinda disclose the name of the stranger, and the purport of his visit; yet its effect on the old lady was alarming.

"Did you say my son was here," she demanded, in a piercing voice; "do not deceive me, girl—why does he tarry. Oh! bring him to my arms, that I may behold him once again ere I die."

Belinda knelt down by her side, and endeavoured to explain as clearly as a voice now choked by sobs, allowed her. By degrees Mrs. Harrington comprehended the truth, when falling back in her chair, she fainted.

Belinda uttered a loud scream, which instantly brought the stranger into the room, while Bertha flew for some restoratives, which were applied by him on her temples and her forehead. The first object which presented itself to the old lady, on again unclosing her eyes, was the kneeling form of the young soldier. She looked intently on him for a moment, then throwing her arms wildly round his neck, she wept tears over him of the bitterest agony. He seemed powerfully affected—he allowed her to yield entirely to her feelings, without moving. When she became more calm, he rose, and sat down in the chair which Belinda had placed for him near her, when he gave the packet into her trembling hands, detailing all that was interesting for her to know relative to her son, with a caution and delicacy worthy of more matured years, sparing her as much as possible during its recital. She listened to him with rapt attention, making many affecting enquiries, which he answered with the kindest attention, and patience. A full hour thus past, when he said that he must reluctantly take his leave.

"You are not going away tonight, my dear," said the old lady, who from the interview so associated him with her son, that he appeared to her as one long known.

"I am quartered at P—," replied Captain Blanchard, smiling; "the regiment into which I have been promoted, arrived there a few weeks ago. I only joined it yesterday, having been on leave in Ireland, since my return from the East."

"Then you will come to see me again," returned Mrs. Harrington, pressing his hand.

"Most happily."

Refreshments were now offered to him, which he

declined, and Mrs. Harrington then desired Belinda to show him down stairs—he would have remonstrated, but the good old lady's word was a law not to be disregarded.

"It is raining, I fear," said Belinda, when the servant had opened the hall door, before which his horse stood awaiting him. "How kind in you, to come so far at this late hour."

"A league is but a short distance," replied Captain Blanchard; "were the distance fifty miles instead, I would traverse it in the darkest night to serve you;" and he pressed her hand between both his as he left the house. When vaulting into the saddle, he bowed low, and galloped off with the speed of an arrow.

An introduction under such exciting circumstances, could not fail to create an interest of no common kind for Captain Blanchard. His extraordinary personal endowments might have attracted the admiration of Belinda in a ball room, but (with her) this never would have ripened into a warmer feeling, had he not been presented to her in so peculiarly touching a manner, and in a scene which had called all the fine emotions of his nature into notice. From this eventful night, his visits at St. Margerets became frequent. Mrs. Harrington only seemed satisfied and tranquil in his presence, when she would talk to him incessantly about her beloved son. Had her mind retained its former strength, she would have felt the evils arising from Belinda's being so constantly and familiarly associated with a young man like Captain Blanchard—but this was gradually becoming more weak and imbecile, while her health declined in proportion. She never had the courage to unclose Colonel Harrington's packet, which was carefully put away in her Cabinet.

Mr. Lindsay beheld with pain the intimacy of Captain Blanchard—no feelings of jealousy assailed him, but his concern for the welfare and happiness of so interesting a creature as Belinda, was very great; and his discernment having led him to a better knowledge of his true character, made him tremble.

Amongst his companions, Captain Blanchard was an especial favourite—full of life and spirits—he was generous to a fault,—his principles were naturally honourable, but more perhaps from pride than strict rectitude. He was subject to violent bursts of passion, which had never been duly restrained—for, (as the idol of a young and widowed mother, whose gentle controul he soon cast aside, although he dearly loved her,) he could brook no restraint, no denial, no disappointment. He wanted the graces of religion, the influence of God's Holy Spirit, to subdue, to soften, and to guide him. Such was the being, who, daily by the side of Belinda, soon entwined himself round her young affections. His attentions to old Mrs. Harrington