

and, when she found nothing more to claim her attention, she leaned over her friend, and, under pretence of arranging the shawl that was folded around her, tenderly kissed her, and then, turning to her embroidery, affected to be engrossed by it, though, in reality, she stooped towards the work, only to hide the starting tear which would no longer be repressed.

But neither did the tear, nor those little acts of love, which Grace, from the purest and most unselfish motives, had so quietly performed, escape the notice of Cecilia. Arthur saw and understood them also; and, as he marked that lacid tear fall like a sparkling gem, upon the bright-hued silks that lay upon the frame, it reproved him for his hasty censure, and offered ample atonement for aught which, in his moment of excessive and unhealthy feeling, he had deemed the result of frivolity. His eye, soft and sympathizing in its expression, was fixed earnestly upon her, when Grace turned suddenly around, and as she encountered that glance of more than usual interest and intensity, a beautiful blush suffused both brow and cheek, and again she bent over her work, till the ringlets of her long fair hair fell like a shadowing veil around her lovely face.

Arthur sighed deeply as he turned slowly away, and, taking up a book, he went on, at Cecilia's request, with a poem of Wordsworth's, which he had commenced reading aloud on the preceding morning. And this day was the picture of many days that witnessed the patient and gentle decline of Cecilia, and the anxious watching, the tender ministrations of love, which faintly told the affection and the anguish of those few devoted friends, who, in the quiet of that calm season, amid the fading beauty of Hazeldell, saw their loved one droop and die, silently and meekly, as the pale autumnal flowers which bowed before the blast, and lay withered and blighted on the earth. Even to the last she walked abroad amid the scenes she loved—on the open piazza, or, when the weather would permit, through the sunny paths of the garden, breathing forth words of love, the outpourings of a soul that glowed with the fervent faith, the triumphant hope of one, to whose spiritual sight was already revealed glorious glimpses of the infinite and the eternal.

They to whom she spoke felt their hearts burn within them as they listened; and to their eyes, even, it then seemed, as if the curtain which veiled from sight the unseen world, was drawn aside, permitting its unimagined splendours to stream in upon their souls. And when they saw her glorified form vanishing from them, amidst the harmonies and beatified joys of Heaven, scarcely would they, so fraught had their hearts become with her calm truth, so strong in her all-

conquering faith, so elate with joy that she had gained that blessed haven of eternal rest,—scarcely would they have held her back to earth, even had such power been granted them to use.

The day on which she left them, she had conversed much, and in a tone of such cheerfulness, that one who had not watched the progress of her fatal disorder, might have believed its crisis past, and that health was once more giving a glad promise of return. She spoke with interest of her childish and youthful days, and even with tears expressed to her grandmother the grateful sense she cherished of her tender and protecting love. She alluded also to many little plans of benevolence which she had left incomplete, and especially commended to the care of Arthur, and of Grace, while she remained at Hazeldell, a school for the children of the humbler classes, which she had established, and for several years supported at her own expense.

As the day drew to a close, and the sun was seen through a bay-window, setting in unusual splendour, she looked towards it with a smile, that seemed an emanation of its own glory, and expressed a wish to go upon the piazza, and gaze, it might be for the last time, on its decline. Fearing for her the evening air, they would have dissuaded her from her purpose, but she gently insisted that they must not deny her wish, and immediately both Grace and Arthur assisted her to rise, and supported her towards the door. She moved thus, half across the room, when her step faltered—her countenance changed—and as Mrs. Howard, who was anxiously observing her, came hastily forward, Cecilia threw her arms towards her, and fell with them around her neck.

"Dearest grandmamma, do not weep for me; we shall soon be reunited, where partings are unknown," she softly murmured, as, tenderly kissing her weeping relative, she laid her head in childlike love upon the faithful bosom where it had so often nestled in its helplessness. "Grace, Arthur, dear friends, kiss me once again, for I am leaving you; but mourn not that I depart—I go to the Friend and Saviour whom we love, who has redeemed us from sin and from death—to His Father, and to our father, in whose presence, I trust through Him, to find rest and joy for ever more."

She sunk down in the arms that were almost powerless to sustain her, as with an effort she uttered these words, and with an upward glance of holy joy, and the low murmur of prayer upon her lips, she closed her eyes, and, with a gentle sigh, her pure spirit left its lovely tenement, and ascended to its native skies. Mrs. Howard resigned the lifeless form of her beloved child to Arthur, when its celestial inmate had departed,