

ing out clear and musical, as if sturdy labor had proclaimed a jubilee.

And all the long afternoon Meta walked with Morris, her arm linked in his; every woodland path was threaded, and often they stopped and looked sadly round, thinking it was perhaps the last time they might look together on the sweet scene she had so loved from childhood, and which he had loved from sympathy since they first walked there, with gay and happy hearts, in the early days of his convalescence. And how brightly beautiful it looked this day, as if in mockery of their parting sorrow! How quiet too, as they now sat together on a mossy bank!

That trickling rill seemed babbling with a hundred silver tongues, and each faded leaf was heard as it fell slowly from the withered bough! Ever and again the timid partridge flew up with startled cry, or the red breast uttered a sharp note, and bright butterflies, and swarming insects came out to bask in the brief sunlight, their myriad wings sounding like fairy harps,—and overhead the squirrel chirped merrily, bounding from bough to bough, and bearing away a store of nuts to garner for his wintry wants. Meta, burdened with sad thoughts, laid her head confidently on Morris' shoulder, and wept, bitterly. But he lifted her sweet face, and kissed away the glittering drops as they fell, and murmured words of hope and affection, in low, earnest tones, that fell upon her heart, rather than her ear, and brought back smiles, fluttering like sunshine in an April shower. Slowly they returned to the house, for it was not yet the hour of parting.

Evening came, and under its shelter, Captain Morris was to seek the American camp. A boat waited at the end of the little wooded promontory, just where one had touched the strand some few weeks before, on the evening when Meta's playful mistake gave her the alarm of a stranger's presence. And Morris again waited there;—wrapped in a similar disguise, pacing the sands with impatient steps, and often stopping and looking through the gloom, to discern if any object was approaching in the imperfect star-light. Two figures were seen, coming along silently and rapidly, and one, bounding like an eager child from her companion was received into his open arms, and welcomed with the fondest words which a right loving heart could frame into expressions of endearment. How precious were those fleeting moments, as they lingered on the brink of separation! but, beyond there loomed the dark, uncertain future!

"Meta dearest," he said, "time presses and we have but one parting moment at command.

Be strong in faith and happier days shall yet dawn upon us,—happier for the brief trials that can only test our love, but have no power to weaken it! I have no fears that your constancy can be shaken by any adverse blast, nor can I believe your father will sacrifice your happiness to a scheme of interest. Let us hope for the best; remember, love, my happiness is linked with yours, and while life lasts, no earthly power can separate them."

"Oh Morris, you know not my father's wilful determination," she said, with tears; "I see a dark shadow rising before us, and my heart almost fails me, when I think that I must be *alone* to meet it. But," and with forced gaiety, she added quickly, "I am wrong to trouble you with my foolish fears; your little Meta can be very brave for your sake, and she would deny her Dutch ancestry if she had not a spice of obstinacy."

"Dear Meta," he said, deeply moved, "it is a hard struggle to part from you thus, a hard duty which compels me to leave you in doubt and surrounded by difficulties. It is no ordinary self-denial to leave you, without seeking to persuade you to become the companion of my fortunes; but a debt of gratitude is sacred, and your father's hospitality which kindly sheltered me in misfortune, has consecrated his parental claims. Believe me it is a hard struggle, dearest Meta, and if my faith in you was not as strong as my love, my resolution would too surely fail. Give me one assurance and I shall leave you with a less heavy heart; should any unexpected trouble arise, promise to apprise me on the instant; my arrangements will make communication easy; have no hesitation—no delay, I will not fail you; will you promise this, dearest?"

"I will," said Meta firmly. "But it is not for myself I fear so much, it is for you, dear Morris; surrounded by danger as you must be, and constantly exposed to deadly strife, can I for a moment feel that your life is secure, or that we may ever meet again?"

"This is all idle talk, dear," he replied, assuming a cheerfulness which was very far from his heart, "you must not speak of dangers or you may make a coward of me, and still more you must not *think* of them, or that little tender heart of yours will grow very weak and foolish. Our parting moment is even now delayed too long; let us say farewell cheerfully, and our hearts will be lighter when we think of it."

Again and again the sad word was spoken, and the sad embrace given, and then with a fervent "God bless you," Morris consigned the weeping girl to Gertrude who waited at a little distance. Then