

"It would be in vain; I know my father well, dear Harvey; I have not dared to address him on the painful subject, harrassed as he is by other cares."

"Belinda, if you send me from you again alone, you doom me to ruin, had I any motive, any stimulus to raise me, above the temptations by which I am constantly surrounded, it would guard me from them."

"Oh, my beloved Harvey, can you have a more noble motive than duty, and gratitude to God, a higher reward than eternal life," replied the dear girl, drawing away from him and gazing earnestly and seriously in his face, "if these holy ties bind you not, would one of earth hold you? never, never."

"I wish to God, I could feel it so, my Belinda, but I appear to be a mark for the divine wrath, nothing prospers with me."

"All chastisements are sent in love, dearest Harvey, not in wrath, the still small voice you have slighted, and God now speaks to you from amidst the whirlwind, because he wills that you should be saved, neglect not his warnings, else heavier sorrows than this will encompass you."

"If I lose you, Belinda, I am indifferent to all else, I care not what becomes of me."

"Alas, your devoted mother, has she no claims upon your affection?"

Blanchard covered his eyes with both hands, after a brief silence he suddenly said in an animated tone:

"Belinda, would your father consent to our union, before my departure, if I promised to leave you under his charge," this abrupt enquiry was startling, the pale cheek of Belinda crimsoned as she paused to reflect, ere she replied:

"No, dearest Harvey, that cannot be, since the obedience I now owe to my father, would be transferred to you, and if you desired it, my duty would be to accompany you."

Blanchard marked her hesitation before she answered him, and this encouraged him to urge her, so eloquently that I perceived her resolution was fast failing her, when Mr. Harrington entered the room. He looked much distressed on beholding the altered appearance of these young people, and taking his daughter in his arms he said:

"Blanchard, I confess my hastiness in having written to you as I did, and I am sorry for it, but when the happiness of this dear child was involved, you cannot be surprised."

Blanchard accepted the hand he extended in amity, and then replied:

"You wronged me, sir, in many things, but I can forgive you."

"You are looking extremely ill," remarked Mr. Harrington with anxiety, "I grieve that your own inconsiderate and intemperate conduct should have caused such misery to you both, God knows how it will all terminate."

"That rests with you, sir, Belinda's sense of duty

impels her to bow to your severe decision, but she is sinking under it."

"Blanchard, you have no right to blame me for what your own folly has produced—you had my free consent—happiness was in your hand, but if you cast it from you, is that my fault. You would not have me give you my innocent child, while the tongue of opprobrium is raised against you—while a husband and father lies wounded on his bed, stricken by you—ere the calumnies are explained and removed which darken you. No, it is impossible, you cannot ask it."

"No sir, I cannot expect you to suffer your daughter to accompany me, I feel that I have forfeited that blessing—but not all claim to the fulfilment of your promise. Let us only be united before my departure, and I will cheerfully leave her with you, until you conceive me more worthy of your confidence."

Mr. Harrington started, he looked from Blanchard on Belinda, who kneeling before him with clasped hands, gazed on him with silent agony.

"Is such your desire, my child," asked the father, deeply moved.

"Oh, my father, my earnest desire is to fulfil my duty at the sacrifice of all else, even if I die under it," she replied, in tones which seemed to pierce the hearts of all who heard her; "but had you seen Harvey as I have seen him, assisting the helplessness and soothing the sorrows of your aged mother, you would love him even as I love him. Think of his devoted conduct in watching over the dying bed of your brother—think how, at the risk of his own life, he saved your child, and deny not the claim he has upon your gratitude."

She ceased, when Mr. Harrington raising her in his arms, while tears rushed to his eyes, placed her in those of Blanchard, as he said:

"Enough, you have conquered—take her Blanchard, she is yours—on the day of your embarkation shall your union be cemented, with this restriction, that you solemnly promise me on the word of a man of honour, not to withdraw her from the parental roof without my free concurrence."

Blanchard pressed the beloved girl convulsively to his heart—for a few moments he was unable to reply, he then said:

"I pledge you my sacred word to adhere to the stern decree—should the service upon which I am going, terminate speedily, I may possibly obtain leave in a year—during that time I shall have the comfort to know that she is safe with you, but I fear you will not remain at St. Margerets so long?"

"Yes, my friend, it is happily so arranged," returned Mr. Harrington, laying his hand kindly on his arm, and endeavouring to smile; "nor in giving you my Belinda, do you receive a portionless wife—I will explain this to you anon."

"She is rich in her own dear merits," replied