

from a world where no passions disturbed his pure and happy mind, where all was bright, and good, and holy. The change was not in Beatrice alone; for the light of day discovered to her the ravages that grief and illness had made in her husband, and in much alarm she said:

"You, too, have been ill, dearest Claude! suffering! and so far from home! How I long to hear all that you have to tell me since that dreadful night."

"You will hear a tale of bitterness and of well-merited punishment," replied Sir Claude; "but nothing less severe could have shaken the strong holds of pride in my stubborn heart. Beatrice, you will henceforth find me an altered man. That which I have hitherto accounted virtue, God called sin, the very sin which cast the angels down from Heaven, and expelled man from Paradise—pride—undue ambition. What right have we to cherish these qualities, owing all we do to the forbearance and mercy of Him whose sufferings have redeemed us from the curse of sin. By their unlimited indulgence how many dark passions have been excited within me, producing consequences that no remorse or repentance can retrieve. Yet I must not talk thus to you," he added, on perceiving the agitation of Beatrice. "Sit down, love, and say if you have entertained no hard thoughts against me for my apparently cruel desertion of you for so many months?" He drew her fondly towards him on the sofa as he made the inquiry.

"The power to think has but lately been restored to me, dearest Claude," replied Beatrice; "yet God is my witness that I have felt too deeply mine own heavy aggressions to dwell upon any part of your conduct, save only your affection. The reflection that you considered me so very guilty was for some time dreadful to me; but even this was swallowed up in heavier sorrows. Oh! Claude, to see those dear, those lovely children die, and you absent!"

She paused, unable to say more. Sir Claude, also, remained silent, evidently struggling with his feelings. He then started up, and, in a tone hurried and abrupt, said:

"Beatrice, dear, I have not seen our daughter; where is she?"

Beatrice smiled through her tears as she rang the bell, when Mrs. Golding entered with the infant, which she placed in the arms of its father. The little thing had just awakened, and fixed her large blue eyes in astonishment on the face of the stranger. Long did he gaze upon her, studying every lineament to trace who she resembled, then tenderly kissing her, he returned her to the nurse, and walked over to the window. Mrs. Golding felt a little disappointment that he made no comment on the striking beauty of the babe, who she had dressed in her christening robes to set her

off to the best advantage; but Beatrice, who could readily enter into his feelings, signed to her to take the child away, when Sir Claude resumed his seat by her side, saying:

"Beatrice, I fear you will never like to return to Norwood Abbey after all you have suffered there. Indeed I can scarcely expect you to do so, at least until time has softened the remembrance of the past."

"Do not yield to such a thought for one moment, my beloved," replied Beatrice; "that spot is dearer to me than any other upon earth, and whenever I am strong enough to travel, it is my earnest desire to go there for the sake of our dear mother. I confess that I never wish to enter our home in Grosvenor Square again.

"Nor shall you," replied Sir Claude, affectionately. "I have never ceased to regret having exposed your guileless nature to the snares and follies of fashionable life. Henceforth I trust we may live as those who are looking for another and a better world. You see I have profited by my trials," he added, smiling.

"May God be praised!" replied Beatrice, impressively. "I trust that ultimately we may both become gainers by the salutary corrections we have received. But you have not told me what you think of our child? Ah, Claude, will you ever love her as well as ——" Here she stopped.

"Fear it not—in a little time," he replied in his tenderest manner. "She is a fair sweet thing, whose strong likeness to you must soon win for her my love. What name have you given her, dear?"

"Your mother's. Poor mamma wished her to have borne mine; but I thought you might prefer that of Claudia."

"Then you thought very wrong, and must repair your error, will you not, my own Beatrice?" and he clasped her in his arms.

The pale cheek of Beatrice became faintly tinged as it rested there. She spoke not, but her throbbing heart revealed all that she would have said, had not tears of grateful joy prevented her utterance.

In the course of this happy day Sir Claude narrated to Beatrice all that had befallen him since their unfortunate separation; but as there were many pauses during the recital—many questions asked and replied to, which, however interesting to themselves, might prove tedious to our readers—we prefer to give his story in our own words.

The morning that Beatrice departed with her child for Norwood Abbey, Sir Claude, in a state almost of desperation, sought Lord Stepney, to wreak vengeance upon him for the misery he had occasioned; but on arriving at his hotel he learnt that his lordship had set out at an early hour for the continent. Sir Claude stamped his foot in fury and disappointment.