

## "IT IS OVER IN A MOMENT."

"A moment! one moment, what an effect it produces upon years! Virtue, crime, glory, shame, war, empire, rest upon moments! Death itself is but a moment, yet eternity is its successor."

"My dear Ellen, you are too severe on Amelia; she is only a child, and you cannot expect perfection from her," said Mr. Walton, as the door closed upon the retreating form of their eldest daughter. "Besides, she is really amiable, and is rarely in a passion. I acknowledge when she does get angry she is violent enough, but it is all over in a moment. At eight years old, I assure you, one does not find blameless children."

"But you forget, my dear husband, that in the angry moment of which you speak, the happiness, nay, the life of others, may be destroyed. We cannot, if we would, continue much longer to excuse Amelia's delinquencies, on the score of childhood; and, unless this passion be conquered soon, it will be her curse during life. It was but yesterday my hand, interposed between herself and little Charlie, was all that saved the child from a blow, the effects of which, you see, are still perceptible," exhibiting, as she spoke, a spot on her delicate hand.

"Goodness, Ellen! why did you not tell me this at the time?"

"Because, my dear, I reproved Amelia myself for it; and her affectionate heart was sufficiently punished by seeing me suffer."

Just then the subject of their conversation rushed into the room, her exquisitely chiselled features lighted up by a glow of benevolence, and her fair hair floating upon her shoulders, like a shower of golden light playing around her face, and her apron half-filled with hyacinths and violets.

"Mamma, papa, here is a poor woman—can Mrs. Burton give me some meat and bread for her and her babe? Mamma, quick! she is so hungry!"

"The elements of a fine woman are there," murmured the delighted father.

"And must not be spoiled by foolish indulgence," replied the wise step-mother, as she followed the lively child, to investigate the cause of distress, which had called forth her kindly feelings.

It was morning, and the cheerful sun was gleaming through the rose-coloured curtains, which draped the windows of a superb parlour in

—square. The paintings, sculpture, the piano, harp, music books, beside the numberless arrangements always found in the abode of taste, betokened a female hand; and interested one at once in its occupants. Near where the door into a conservatory stood invitingly open, filling the air with fragrance, sat in a recess a young lady of about nineteen. A desk was before her, and paper, partly covered, told that she had been writing; but the pearl-handled pen had fallen from her grasp, and, lost in reverie, she scarcely heeded the entrance of a servant, who placed before her a packet, saying, apologetically:

"It was brought last night, Miss Amelia, but I forgot to do—"

"Forgot, James! you *always* forget, I think."

"My poor mother died last night, Miss Amelia, and I was called away to see her, just as Mr. Churchill's servant brought this."

He was interrupted this time, not by the impetuous passion of his young mistress, but by the tears which at once filled those fine eyes; and, knowing from past experience, that sorrow was the only excuse needed, the man withdrew.

Amelia Walton opened the packet. It contained a very beautiful copy of the Sacred Scriptures; after admiring which, and devouring the accompanying note, she touched a concealed spring of her desk, and drew forth a miniature. It was of a young man. The features were plain, except a pair of large, full, meekly-beaming, hazel eyes, which spoke of soul, and the lofty forehead, which revealed intellect. Our heroine gazed not long, however, ere its original entered, and, advancing to meet him, she exclaimed:

"Dear Edward, I knew of your coming only at this moment; and it is a kind Providence that aunt and uncle have gone to G—."

The fine open countenance of her auditor was darkened like the shadow the cloud flings upon the sunny landscape; and as he led her to her seat, and placed himself on an ottoman by her side, he said:

"You have at once brought before me the immediate cause of my petition for a long *tête-à-tête*. You know that I have long and faithfully loved you; and I do believe that my heart's best affection is more than repaid by you. Our religious