

ed with a delight as new as it was free from the slightest taint of worldly ambition.

Mrs. Annesley soon recovered from her temporary dejection, caused by the absence of her most beloved child, the reflection that her brightest hopes for her advancement in life were consummated in her union with the heir of Sir George Brereton, acting as a talisman to restore her cheerfulness; and she wasted hours in the indulgence of golden dreams, wherein she beheld Beatrice the adored and admired, shining as a star at the court of her sovereign, while she yearned for the period of her return with her husband, who had promised to spend a few weeks at Annesley Park, that she might discourse with her upon all those schemes, which were to realise this ambitious desire. She had received several letters from her, overflowing with expressions of her happiness, and her praises of Claude, accompanied by vivid descriptions of the beautiful places they had visited. She had dwelt on their delicious moonlight rambles, their excursions on the waters, and the books they were reading together, adding that "she did not find it at all difficult to obey."

"There now, Mr. Annesley," said the mother, carrying her letter in triumph to her husband; "am I not a true prophetess? did I not always say that my blessed child would make an obedient and excellent wife?"

"Light showers may be expected towards the middle of this month," muttered Mr. Annesley, who was at that moment intently studying a new almanac; "and heavy storms with thunder and lightning at its close. What did you say, my dear?" he added, looking up suddenly.

"What did I say? Bewildered, moon-struck, cold-hearted man that you are," replied the indignant Mrs. Annesley; "your indifference to things so deeply interesting, would move a saint to anger. What are your poor weak brains engrossed upon now, may I ask?"

"The state of the weather, my love. And so Beatrice is very happy. Let me see when does the moon change."

Mrs. Annesley, too much provoked to risk her voice, at these words flung out of the room, slamming the door so violently behind her as to shake every glass case in the study of the man of science, who merely said:

"A most correct and valuable almanac this; I declare the storm has already commenced. Mercy on us, what a tremendous wind; quite a hurricane I vow."

Who can express the joy of the fond and devoted mother, when, after an absence of three months, Beatrice was once more clasped in her embrace, or who describe the happiness of the young creature herself as she gazed on each familiar face—each spot endeared to her from her childhood.

"Yet beloved as you all are, I would leave you

again and again for this one," and she clung fondly to her husband, who stood by her side, his eyes resting in tender admiration upon her.

Mary viewed them both in affectionate pride and gladness, nor did she shrink as before from the fraternal salute of Colonel Brereton, for calmed and hushed as a summer evening were her feelings now; and fervent the prayer she ejaculated that the happiness she beheld might be founded on a firmer base than the shattered fragments of a shrine dedicated to the idol Pleasure.

The first few weeks after the return of Colonel Brereton and his bride were spent in receiving the visits and congratulations of the friends of Mr. and Mrs. Annesley, a novelty that rather amused Beatrice, until she found that Claude usually made his escape from them, when she too became weary of sitting beautifully dressed, to listen to their compliments and prosings; and one day, perceiving him walking towards the wicket gate, she rushed down the steps of the balcony, and, running after him, bounded over the gate just as he had passed through it.

"How, Beatrice, is this the conduct of one who aspires to the respected title of matron?" enquired Colonel Brereton, smiling, as he caught her hand; "why have you left your friends?"

"Oh, because they weary me to death, treating me as if I were as old as themselves, and saying that now I am become a married woman, they suppose I will give up balls and dancing. Claude, do you think I shall ever be a fat old woman like Lady Clayton—what a horrid thing it would be?"

"It would indeed, dear," replied Colonel Brereton, laughing; "but see, Antonio is leading round my horse—if you would like to ride, I will wait till you are ready."

"Oh, thank you a thousand times! I will not detain you five minutes," and she scampered off to change her dress.

While strolling on the lawn, awaiting the return of Beatrice, Colonel Brereton was joined by Mrs. Annesley, who had been anxious for many days to address him on the subject nearest her heart, but had found no opportunity to do so. She commenced it now by telling him that a box from London had just arrived, addressed to Mrs. Claude Brereton, containing a splendid court dress.

"Indeed!" replied Colonel Brereton, carelessly. "I was not aware that she had ordered one."

"I ventured to do so during her absence," rejoined Mrs. Annesley, smiling; "as I felt assured your first wish would be to present your wife to her sovereign, previous to her entering into the gaities of a town life."

"Then you have quite mistaken my intention, Mrs. Annesley, which is to take her down to Norwood, on our leaving this. I have no desire to plunge so young a creature as Beatrice into such scenes of