

sumption having cast her sable mantle over his domestic circle and swept them one by one from his hearth. About four months after the news of Colonel Harrington's death had reached England, Belinda was walking with her grandmother in the shrubbery, which was divided by a park paling from the road; when suddenly a military band was heard playing the grenadier's march, accompanied by the firm tread of soldiers. The old lady wildly started, a thrill of agony convulsed her frame; she clasped her hands exclaiming: "ah, my poor boy!" Belinda would have led her away, but she remained rooted to the spot. Who has not felt the power which some well known air possesses to recall emotions, either of pleasure or of pain, to bring back scenes in which we have borne a part, or beloved forms gone, or perchance divided by distance; we may have heard it sung by them, when it becomes so interwoven with their image, that to hear it again when far away creates a pang indescribable. Oh, yes, there are sounds in music, there are peculiar perfumes in flowers, which can touch the inmost chord of our heart, and awaken it in tearful ejaculations to God. Absence is indeed full of sorrowful, yet most sweet memories; who would be without them?

When again Mrs. Harrington re-entered the house, a slight paralytic seizure affected her, from which she only partially recovered; her fine mind never regained its former vigour. Beautiful it was to behold the amiable unwearied attentions of Belinda, to her suffering relative, who became after this, at times, wayward and capricious; she strove in every way to mitigate her trials, nor would she leave her even to the care of an attached and faithful servant, but constantly slept in her room at night. Hers was now a melancholy life for one so young—yet it the better prepared her to cope with the disappointments and sorrows, which were to be her portion. Happily, she possessed a very buoyant spirit, which rose against each wave, and enabled her to extract many a pleasure, from a source simple in itself—and she felt it highly consolatory to repay the care and kindness she had received from her excellent grandmother, in cheering and supporting her in the last days of her earthly pilgrimage. She was sitting near her one evening, when a double knock was heard at the door; both started, for at that hour it was an unusual sound—presently the old female servant, who attended upon Mrs. Harrington, entered, to announce that a strange gentleman was below, who desired to see her.

"A strange gentleman," repeated Mrs. Harrington, "who can he be?"

"I think he is an officer, he is so tall, and so handsome," returned the servant.

"Is that imperative, Bertha," enquired Belinda, smiling.

"Indeed, Miss Belinda, there is something about

him which tells me he is in the army—he looks so grand, so like——" Here she paused.

"My son," sighed Mrs. Harrington, mournfully. Belinda laid her finger on her lip as she looked at Bertha.

"I know of none who would come to see me," continued Mrs. Harrington, in a querulous tone; "nor do I wish to see strangers. Belinda, child, go to the person, and ask him what he wants."

Belinda immediately rose to obey her, though she naturally felt timid at the idea of meeting one so perfectly unknown. She took a small lamp, and descended the stairs to the dining room, into which he had been shown. The stranger was standing near the door, on her entrance, and the impression his first appearance made, was almost startling. Bertha had called him handsome, but that feebly expressed the matchless beauty of his face and form; his deep blue eyes, full of animation, glanced rapidly towards the door, as it opened—the expression of his noble countenance might have been considered too stern, had it not softened into a smile the most bland, as he stepped forward to meet the now embarrassed girl. He took the lamp from her hand, and laid it on the table, apologising at the same time for his late visit, by saying, that duty had detained him until now.

There was something in the tone of his voice, peculiarly winning—Belinda almost fancied that some bright vision stood before her, who would vanish as suddenly as he had appeared.

"Grandmama is, I grieve to say, very much an invalid," she replied to his first salutation; "her nerves are sadly shaken—I almost fear, that tonight she cannot have the pleasure of seeing you—may I convey your wishes?"

The stranger produced a small packet from his bosom, as he said:

"I was desired by one, dear to Mrs. Harrington, to deliver this into no other hands but her own; I received it as the last request of my commanding officer, Colonel Harrington, with whom I served in India."

Belinda, on hearing these words, became much agitated; she trembled violently, and rested her hand on the table for support.

"Were you then indeed with my beloved uncle in his last moments," she said, gazing earnestly in his face, which expressed the utmost sympathy for her. "Oh how will she be affected on beholding you—how may I dare tell her?"

"Possibly the sight of one by whom her son was much regarded, may rather tend to soften, than to aggravate her sorrow," returned the stranger; "prepare her for my presence, since my orders to see herself were strict, and *must* be obeyed."

Belinda sat down for one moment to compose herself—she pressed her hands over her eyes, while