

"They told me you were gone, Amy," said the child, in a feeble, hoarse voice.

"They would not suffer me to come to you, my darling," she replied; "but I will never, never leave you again."

"Come, then, and lay your head down by me," whispered Arthur, "I want to talk to you; there, that is nice," as her lovely face rested close to his, and she held him in her arms. "Amy, do you know Mr. Martyn says I shall soon leave this dark, dark room, and go where it will always be light. Oh, I shall be glad to go, for this is a sad place. Harold never smiles now—every thing I look on is unhappy—the sun, even, does not shine upon me."

"But it will shine, my darling; and where you are going, its glory will surround you; for has not Christ said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

"I remember you taught me that in your pleasant room—yes, yes, and there was another."

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff support me," repeated Amy; "and then that beautiful one, 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.' Such words are precious, are they not, dearest?"

Arthur faintly smiled, and the expression of his countenance was so seraphic, that Amy felt she did indeed look upon a being belonging not to this frail earth. After a pause he again spoke, but even more feebly: "My own mamma is coming to-night—how I wish it was here."

"Soon, too soon will it arrive," replied Amy, mournfully.

"Do not go away till she comes; I feel so quiet with you near me, and my eyes are getting so heavy." He nestled his head close on her bosom as he uttered this. "Amy, he continued, after another short silence, 'have you seen my poor pony lately?'"

"I saw him last evening, dearest, and he is quite well."

"Good, good," repeated the child.

Mrs. Bennet had been standing at the foot of the bed, deeply affected at the scene before her. When she looked on the youthful, beautiful Amy, radiant in health, as she held the wasted form of dear Arthur so affectionately in her arms, she seemed to her like a pitying angel, who had flown from heaven to snatch him from the cruel grasp of death. She sat down, watching, with painful anxiety, the result. The position in which Amy was laying was constrained and uneasy; but as Arthur appeared so still, she would not have moved for the world. Presently she saw his eye gradually close, while his breathing became almost inaudible. She continued to listen, with her gaze intently fixed on the

object of her solicitude, until she felt perfectly assured that he was in a profound sleep.

One full hour passed, and still the heroic girl stirred not. She heard the door gently open, and beheld the Earl enter. She marked his start of surprise on seeing her—his first look of agony, and then his smile, as his eyes fell on the slumbering child. Mrs. Bennet had risen, and whispered a few words in his ear. He turned again towards the bed, lingered a few moments, and then retreated with noiseless steps. Arthur was by this time in so deep a repose, that Amy ventured to change her position for one in which she might rest more easily; but as the child's arm was still round her neck, she dared not rise. She had tasted nothing that day save a cup of coffee, which Ursula had brought to her before she quitted her room; but her mind was so completely absorbed, that she experienced no sensation of hunger. Insensibly, a drowsiness crept over her, owing to the extreme stillness which reigned around, added to want of rest, from the anxiety she had suffered; her thoughts became confused, till at length they ceased—and she too slept.

Hour after hour stole away; and when Amy again unclosed her eyes, she thought she must be dreaming. A lamp was burning on a table near her, while, at the foot of the bed, stood a majestic-looking woman, with her large dark eyes fixed on the youthful forms before her; the deepest melancholy pervaded her fine features, united to an expression of yearning affection. She was supported by Lord Blondville, who was nearly concealed by the drapery from the canopy. Amy half raised her head in alarm, when the two figures instantly disappeared. Mrs. Bennet then drew near, and bending over her, told her that it was the Countess whom she had seen. Amy found that during her slumber Arthur had become more disengaged; she, therefore, now, with the assistance of Mrs. Bennet, gently stole from his side; but on attempting to stand, she felt so weak and exhausted that she would have fallen had not the good housekeeper held her, and led her to the door of the ante-chamber, where she was met by Lady Blondville—whose first salutation was to press her fondly in her arms, and weep tears of anguish, affection, and gratitude over her. She then turned to the Earl, saying:

"Harold, take this noble child, and give her some restorative—see, she is drooping."

Most readily, most tenderly did he obey, as he received the fainting girl from his mother, who immediately re-entered her beloved Arthur's room. There were some warm jellies standing on a salver; the Earl held one of them to the lips of Amy, who thankfully received it; he then conducted her towards her own apartment. At the door of her boudoir he said:

"My more than sister, may God in heaven bless and preserve you. I shudder when I think to what