

and when she once more held him in her arms, and pressed him to her maternal heart, she felt more than repaid for all the past.

Years thus rolled away, and he painfully witnessed on each fresh return, the loved form of his mother became more altered—delicate health and care had made their usual ravages, and she was unable to walk so far as church. One more voyage he determined to make—for during a protracted war he had felt it imperative to stifle all private feelings, and continued his profession—but from which the near prospect of a peace would relieve him with honour. He then determined to retire, and live and die with her, who had garnered up her heart's best affections in him alone. He went, and at the close of a winter's day—when the snow was on the ground, three years afterwards, he stood once more at the gates of his mother's house—they were closed, the windows were barred, and such an air of desolation reigned on all around, that a chill of horror crept over his frame, as he clasped his hands, and leant on the iron railings. A countryman passed, whistling on his way homeward.

"Has Mrs. Selby removed from this," enquired the son, in a faltering tone—his breathing suspended as he awaited an answer.

"Mrs. Selby—the good widow lady," repeated the man—"Alas, yes sir, she is gone—gone home to a better world—she died about three months ago."

"The earth at this moment seemed to close on me," continued Captain Selby, after a long and painful pause, during which his feelings were strongly agitated. "How long I remained insensible I know not, but when I awoke to a miserable recollection, I found myself in the humble abode of the friendly countryman. Here I remained for some days, for I had no power to move. The excellent clergyman, who had been the intimate friend of my beloved mother, came to visit me, and when I was able, insisted on taking me to his house, where he daily strove to pour balm into my wounds—he gave me her dear and well worn Bible, marked in so many places by her revered hand. He spoke of the deep piety and peace which attended her to the last, and repeated her affecting message to me—'tell my darling son when he comes,' she murmured, 'the happiness I have derived from religion—tell him I go, where I trust he may follow me—the way he knows, for we have studied it together. Christ is the way, and it is light—oh, how light.'"

"I left my native place, for to me it was desolate, and continued in the navy, which appeared the only relief from utter loneliness. I wandered into far lands, but the blank never could be filled up, and here it must remain," he added, pressing his hand on his heart, "for go where I may—that cold word, *alone*, is still mine."

This little domestic tale of Captain Selby's, touched our hearts sensibly for its narrator—as for Annie she wept aloud.

"Oh, Captain Selby, I wish you had a sister," she said, "and then home would again become cheerful to you." He looked at her with the affection of a father, and sighing deeply, he rose and walked away to some distance.

When he returned, his countenance had recovered its serenity; and the rest of the evening was spent cheerfully. Annie led him to her flower garden, where she soon found in him a most able and willing assistant—and after his departure at night, we all agreed that we had discovered in this plain, unpretending, amiable stranger, a great addition to our little circle, for Mr. Bertram, on taking leave of him, pressed him to repeat his visit as often as he felt disposed, during his stay at the town of D—.

And now another tempting invitation was in store for Annie. Her young friends, the Misses Fludyer, had arranged with a select party to drive to the beautiful grounds of a nobleman, who possessed a splendid estate in the neighbourhood. Lord Randolph had promised that the band of his regiment should be in attendance. Mrs. Fludyer was to be the chaperon; and as the weather was particularly warm, it was proposed that they should not set out until six o'clock—thus, all was most propitious. Captain Selby was engaged to dine quietly with Mr. Bertram and myself. Annie's delight was unbounded. Captain Selby entered into her innocent joy, and bid her set him a task in her garden; which he promised should be completed by her return.

"And remember if you prove idle," said the dear girl, playfully, "you will find in me a very severe mistress. I want all the pinks tied very neatly, and the withered roses cut away."

"Not one shall be left to offend you, Miss Bertram," replied Captain Selby; "the buds and flowers shall be yours alone—and the withered roses mine."

"Oh! no, no, reserve a few flowers for yourself; but pray call me Annie—all my friends call me Annie?"

"Annie then shall it be," said Captain Selby, pressing her hand with animation—"*κίττις* Annie." Carriage wheels were now heard approaching; she flew to the window. Alas! it was not Mrs. Fludyer; but good old Mrs. Blessington. A look of disappointment shadowed Annie's bright countenance; but it passed away rapidly as she beheld the feeble old lady alight, who was looking unusually pale. On entering the room, she went up affectionately to her young favourite, saying: "My child will you bear with the infirmities of an old woman this evening, and help to cheer her. I have been unwell for some days and much depressed, and I