

(ORIGINAL.)

## GRACE MORLEY.

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

BY E. L. C.

She knows no sympathy with childhood's joys,—  
 No touch of pity for its bursting griefs;  
 And I would have the maiden of my choice,  
 She who should sit beside my household hearth,  
 And o'er my home shed the soft light of love,  
 A child in heart, with feelings that gush'd forth,  
 Like a glad fount, at childhood's ringing laugh  
 And the fair infant's smile.

"AND so the children are to have a pic-nic tomorrow," said Charles Castleton, a young naval officer, approaching a table, at which his cousin Clara Hsley sat copying a cluster of rose-buds, that stood in a vase beside her.

"Yes, should the weather continue fine," answered Clara,—*"It is Henry's birth-day, and mamma has promised them to celebrate it in the woods,—so they are to drive to old Pompey's cottage, and rove to their heart's content among the sweet dells and dingles, and dine in the old wood on the banks of the beautiful river, and return home by moonlight, over the wild mountain road, that you used to love so well, Charles, before you saw fairer and more classic lands on the shores of the blue Mediterranean."*

"More classic, Clara, but not fairer, and surely not dearer; you cannot think that. But for this pic-nic, are we not to share the privileges of the children, and be included in its delights!"

"Doubtless, if you wish it; I dearly love these little rural festivals; but we feared you and Grace might not fancy the boisterous mirth of the children, which, on this annual day of liberty and enjoyment, we make it a point never to restrain; unless, indeed, which is seldom the case, it far 'o'erstep the modesty of nature."

Clara looked up from her drawing, with a glance of soft inquiry as she spoke, for she desired much that her cousin might choose to join this excursion; she wished to share the pleasure of the children, and she could not, neither did she seek to conceal from herself, that his presence would greatly enhance her happiness; Charles had recently returned from a three years cruise in the Mediterranean, and found

Clara, whom he left a child, grown up into a blooming and beautiful woman, not dazzling, but lovely, lovely in person and still more so in mind and character; and with the enthusiasm peculiar to his profession, he had yielded unreservedly to the influence of her attractions. During the month that he had now passed at Oakland, he had breathed words of love into her ear, and if she listened to them in silence, it was not with a reluctant or untouched heart; for that, had thrilled to every whispered accent, and not a word or tone that had fallen from his lips, nor a look that had beamed from his dark and eloquent eyes, but she had garnered them there, and brooded ever over them, with woman's voiceless, yet impassioned tenderness.

But recently a gay and celebrated belle, who was on a visit at Oakland, had shared, Clara sometimes thought, too largely in the attentions and admiration of the young sailor; though as she now raised her sunny eyes to his, she almost forgot the shadows that for a week past had darkened her glowing and happy heart; for there was something in the fond gaze that met hers, which told a tale too dear and flattering to be disbelieved, and she reproached herself for the doubts she had permitted to disturb her peace, and for the wrong she had done her cousin, in supposing for a moment, that all beautiful and courted and admired as was Miss Morley, he could be so vacillating, as already to have transferred, even to her thronged and brilliant shrine, the homage of a heart, that he had so recently proffered to herself.

Clara's eye drooped, and her cheek glowed, as these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind; nay, it burned painfully, when made conscious that he noticed her confusion, as touching her cheek with