

Beatrice, too happy to take offence at the familiarity of the faithful old servant. "But have you no more dreams and omens to relate?"

"Well, it's long since I heard you laugh, my dear, dear young lady, and the sound is like music in my ears," replied Norris. "No, I don't remember another, except that cook tumbled up-stairs last night going to bed; but she has done that often after supper. If you want to hear of signs and wonders you must go to my master. He was saying something about Venus and *the major* to Master Herbert just now as I passed them in the lobby, where they were star gazing at the window."

"Norris, Norris, we must dismiss you," said Mrs. Golding; "you will make my lady quite ill."

"A good laugh never hurt any one yet, Mrs. Golding," replied Norris. "I know that, though I don't pretend to the wisdom of a London *nus*. You shall see how soundly my lady sleeps after it."

The prediction of Norris did not, however, prove correct; for the excitement and sudden transition from heavy grief to joy, together with the hysterical laughter that had been forced from her, kept Beatrice long awake, tossing about on her pillow, unable to rest in any position; and when at length she did fall asleep, painful dreams haunted her, in which she beheld her husband standing on a high mountain, with her lost children. She tried to reach them, but every step she made they receded from her. She stretched forth her arms—she strove to call them, but she could not—and in this agony she awoke, and started up, gazing wildly around. A lamp stood burning on the table, and a few embers still remained in the grate, casting a lurid light on all the objects in the room. The soft breathing of some one near met her ear, and in her alarm she called "Mrs. Golding."

"Do you wish for any thing, love?" inquired a voice that thrilled on her heart. In the same instant the curtains were drawn aside, and she perceived Sir Claude sitting in the large easy-chair close by the bed.

"Ah! my own beloved! thank God it was but a dream!" she exclaimed, while large drops of perspiration stood on her brow, and she trembled excessively.

He supported her in his arms, wiping them away, and speaking to her in gentle tones. His presence re-assured her, and resting her head upon his bosom, she murmured:

"This is Heaven! Oh! how I could sleep here!"

"Then try to do so, my darling," he replied, pressing his lips to hers; "you have been very restless and uneasy, moaning as if you were in pain."

"No, no, I must not be so selfish; you need rest quite as much as I do. Pray go to bed, dearest Claude. It is very late, is it not?"

"Nearly two o'clock, love. Now be silent—this is my post," and he placed himself in a posture

in which he could hold her, and incline easily in the chair.

Beatrice felt too happy to say more. She faintly smiled, saying:

"God bless you!" and in a few more minutes her eyes gradually closed, and the sweetest slumber she had known for months stole over her senses.

It was a bright frosty morning when next she awoke, and the sun was shining cheerily into her windows. Sir Claude had withdrawn; but on the table she saw his watch, and her heart bounded with joy and gratitude to God for the weight of woe He had removed by restoring him. Mrs. Golding was sitting by the fire, with the babe on her knee, the little thing crowing and laughing most merrily. Mrs. Annesley just then entered to see her daughter, delighted to find her so much refreshed, and in such good spirits.

"Mamma, I feel so unable to express my feelings," said Beatrice, as she was clasped in her mother's arms, "do you render God thanks for me! for indeed, indeed I cannot, my heart is so full! Oh! may we ever strive to merit his infinite mercies!"

"We will, my precious child," replied Mrs. Annesley, moved by this appeal. "How little did we know yesterday what a day would bring forth. What a different being Sir Claude appears to all I have ever thought him: so tender, so affectionate. He would not leave you till long past daylight, when I persuaded him to retire to his own room. I have desired that none may disturb him, for he has travelled from the Abbey without halting a single night on the road, and Antonio tells me that he has been woefully ill; yet nothing could induce him to remain at Norwood beyond a day, so eager was he to reach you."

"Poor fellow! and what a day he must have spent there," returned Beatrice. "Oh! how grateful I ought to be for the sweet child God has given to us! that she has been spared, through so many perils, to see her father. I hope he may love her."

"Doubt not that my lady," said Mrs. Golding; "she is too like yourself to be viewed with indifference by Sir Claude, else am I greatly mistaken."

By the time Beatrice was dressed, and had retired into an adjoining sitting room, Sir Claude re-appeared. She rose to meet him, when she was folded with ardour to his breast. He fixed his eyes earnestly upon her, distressed to see the bright and glowing cheek so changed in its healthful hue, and the round and graceful form so wasted and drooping; but her soft blue eyes beamed as kindly as ever—her smile was as sweet—indeed an expression shone in her face, unmarked before, that to him was more lovely than Beatrice in her most beautiful days. If an angel were to descend upon earth, such he thought would be the mild and heavenly aspect he would wear, bespeaking him a visitant