

however, I shall be able to transfer you to Harry Palmer, and Lavinia to Captain Elton."

"Do not think of it for a moment," said Belinda, as her brother turned to leave the apartment. "You misunderstood me altogether. When did I say I disliked Captain Elton?"

"Well, not exactly disliked, perhaps, for that is too harsh a word, but certainly you prefer Harry Palmer."

"Prefer him, no indeed. I have a sincere respect for Captain Elton, I have nothing more for Henry Palmer."

"Why, sister, you surprise me! Report has it, and I am sure I gave credence to it, that Harry had distanced all competitors in the race; and nearly won the prize," he added, laughing, and glancing at his sister's flushed and somewhat discomposed features.

"Report was mistaken, and so were you, dear brother," said Belinda; "but I must go and see what detains Alice and Lavinia; they will be late if they do not hasten."

The town clock had just chimed the hour of two, when several sleighs drove up to Mr. Dalton's dwelling. The hall door opened, and their owners sprang forward to receive their fair charges. Captain Elton, with a courteous salutation, handed Mrs. Dalton, and an elderly female friend, into the vehicle, and placing Belinda on a front seat, sprang up by her side.

"Belinda certainly does appear very happy," mentally ejaculated Charles, glancing at her, as he passed by to enter his own sleigh; "I have seldom seen her look better." And beautiful, indeed, she looked. The crimson velvet bonnet with its plume of white feathers, seemed in admirable contrast to the rich black tresses that fell in luxuriant curls beneath; the cheeks were flushed, perhaps with excitement, perhaps with pleasure, and the whole countenance seemed illumined, as she replied to some question of Captain Elton's. The black velvet pelisse, with its trimming of fur, the tippet and muff of the same material, completed her costume; a very becoming one, at least so thought Captain Elton. But the signal was given, and swiftly and merrily the sleighs passed over the smoothly trodden snow. On they went, through the streets of Halifax which seemed unusually gay — for Christmas was at hand, and the shop windows displayed numberless toys, fancy articles, &c, gift