

added new terrors to the sacrifice, which he would be shortly called to consummate.

And so time passed on, and brought nearer the dreaded day of doom. Fortunately for Beaufort, at least so he deemed it, Lucia was making a parting visit to a friend, who, late as the season had advanced, was still lingering at Nahant for the benefit of sea bathing, and he was of course absolved from constant attendance upon her. But now she had returned. Mr. Dunmore, also, was at home again, and every arrangement for the important occasion was completed. The bridal pair were to leave for Washington immediately after the ceremony, or rather, after a nuptial dejeuner, which was to be given by Mrs. Dunmore, quite in Parisian style, as the good lady, like some other weak people, was fond of engraving foreign habits and customs, on the simplicity of her own republican modes and manners.

The important morning at length arrived, and the little circle, gathered round the breakfast table in Beacon Street, had never met there so silent and abstracted before. Mr. Calthorpe sat absorbed by the daily paper, and in Mrs. Calthorpe's manner there was a degree of feverish anxiety and excitement, quite foreign to her usual calmness and composure. Madelaine looked pale, but her smiles were as sweet as ever, her tones as cheerful—yet, beneath them it was no difficult task to see that the young heart was enduring a struggle fiercer than any it had ever known. Beaufort sat opposite to her, his head resting on one hand, while the other moved the tea-spoon in his cup, raising it at intervals to his lip, but without appearing in the least to lessen its contents. Not a smile brightened the deep gloom of his countenance, not a ray of hope lent gladness to the sad and drooping eyes, that seemed as though they had taken their last look of happiness on earth.

Mrs. Dorival never made her appearance at breakfast, but on this morning Madelaine said she was more indisposed than usual, which furnished her with an excuse, when she had concluded her slight repast, for hurrying away from the table. Beaufort's eye followed her, as she glided from the apartment, and, suppressing a struggling sigh, he rose, and, walking to the window, stood for some minutes leaning abstractedly against the sash. When he turned round he found the room deserted, but a note directed to himself lay on the table. Jerry had not observed him as he stood behind the folds of the curtain, and supposing him only to have quitted the table for a minute, since he saw his cup nearly full, the toast and egg untasted, he had left the billet beside his plate and retired. It was from Mrs. Dunmore, desiring to see him immediately, but stating no reason for the request, and Beaufort, in no mood to be summoned any earlier than necessary, tossed it from him with an impatient "Pshaw!" and left the room.

The guests were to meet at Mrs. Dunmore's at eleven, and Mrs. Calthorpe was already making her toilette. She called in Madelaine, in whose pure and elegant tastes she had great confidence, to decide for her upon the choice of some ornaments as she was hesitating between a set of pearl and turquoise, which latter, as having been the gift of her brother, she thought it more complimentary to him to wear. But Madelaine selected the pearls as best suited to the occasion, and then remained, lending her aid with sweet alacrity to form the bouquet, arrange the delicate scarf, and put the last finish to the elegance of her friend's costume. She saw it complete, and was preparing to return to her mother, when Mrs. Calthorpe turned hesitatingly towards her.

"Dear Madelaine, how I wish you would be persuaded to accompany me," she said. "Mrs. Dunmore and Lucia wished it so much—they long to know you, to atone by their future friendship for all that may have wounded you in the past. Will you not go,—for my sake, for Edward's, and for George —?"

"Oh, no no no," said Madelaine hurriedly, while a bright blush suffused her cheek and brow, and tears rushed to her eyes. "Do not ask me—it pains me to refuse you any thing, yet for worlds I would not stand among strangers, and wish him happiness."

"You shall not, dear," said Mrs. Calthorpe, touched by her emotion. "I was wrong to speak to you of this, but forgive me—and go now, for I hear Sydney frolicking round your mother, and fear he will annoy her."

She tenderly embraced her, and as Madelaine returned the caress, her heart swelled with gratitude for the gift of such a friend, and the warm smiles of affection that played upon her lip, dried the momentary tears that had glistened in her eyes. The usual little cares and attentions claimed by her helpless mother, occupied her for some time, and when she had got her seated at her favourite window, with little Sydney perched on a stool beside her, and both amused in watching the gay groups strolling beneath the old elms in the mall opposite, or crossing the broad and beautiful common in all directions, she descended to the library for a volume of coloured engravings, one of which, a view of Jamaica, her mother wished her to copy, that she might retain in her possession a sketch of her native island.

Madelaine did not immediately find the book, and ascending the library steps, she took down one volume after another, and got so engaged in glancing over their pages, that she did not heed the sudden stopping of a carriage in the street, nor the consequent opening and closing of the hall door, which occasioned some noise. She at last found the volume for which she had been searching, and was on the point of quitting the library with it, when