

the birds were carolling merrily in the trees, whose branches cast a grateful shade on the prospect without.

"Who would exchange this calm," I exclaimed, "for the false glare and bustle of last night?"

"I trust very few, were they doomed to choose the one only," replied Annie; "but the change is delightful to me! And my own dear room seems doubly welcome this morning, after our gay evening. Sorry should I be to spend many such, lest the excitement should produce languor, and a disinclination to my home duties, but entire seclusion from society is not desirable; it weakens the mind and we are unconsciously cherishing the evils of our nature, because there is nothing to call them forth, and pride ourselves in the vain belief that we are exempt from the little envies and weaknesses we behold in others, because no temptations are near."

Annie's reasoning struck me as just, and I was going to reply when her father entered the room.

"Ladies, I have invited a beau to join our dinner table today," he said gaily. "So pray, my Annie, make your best pudding and prepare your cates."

"Is it Lord Randolph?" asked Annie, with a heightened colour.

"My little girl's head is running on lords, is it?" replied Mr. Bertram smiling, and stroking her fair brow. "No, my child, it is Captain Selby. I found him so intelligent, so agreeable, and apparently so estimable, that I wish much to cultivate his acquaintance."

"But he is so very plain, papa!"

"Was it my Annie who then spoke?" said her father, gravely.

"Alas, yes, and without reflection," she replied sorrowfully, "but I wish Captain Selby had not that horrid scar. I do not think I should ever get accustomed to it."

"Not when you remember the cause in which he received it?"

"I will try to do so—I am ashamed of myself," said Annie. "There, dear Mrs. Selwyn," she continued, "you behold a weakness which last evening has called into light. I knew not that I estimated people by their good appearance before—and I have a new task to perform in subduing it." She kissed her father affectionately, as she lightly sprang from the glass door leading into the shrubbery, adding: "And now I will go and give my orders, and gather fresh flowers for my basket, in honour of our guest?"

Captain Selby arrived at the hour he had promised, and had walked from D—, (where he had become a temporary resident, at the same hotel occupied by Lord Randolph,) through a warm sun and over dusty roads. He looked fatigued, and the shade of Annie's pleasant room appeared doubly grateful.

"What a haven of rest," he exclaimed, looking

delightedly around him, as we all rose to welcome him. "This speaks of home—home," he repeated feelingly, "how long has that endeared term been a stranger to me?"

"Take this chair, Captain Selby," said dear Annie, touched by his mournful tone of voice, and placing the most comfortable one in a cool recess of the open window.

He looked at her youthful countenance, beaming with kindness as she spoke. A tear dimmed his eye—he pressed her hand as he murmured: "Good—kind—and most lovely."

As the day wore away, Captain Selby's manner became more cheerful, then it was we discovered in him the intellectual, intelligent companion. From the nature of his profession he had travelled much, and seen many countries, and endured many dangers. Annie listened, with deep interest to his animated accounts of perils by land and perils by sea; but it was in the evening, as we sat beneath a spreading tree, on a rustic seat, with the fresh fruit gathered by our dear girl, that his heart, warmed by the attentions he had received, opened to the more domestic details of his early life.

He had from a boy been in the Navy, the favourite profession of his father, who he unfortunately lost when quite young. He was the only child of his widowed mother, and her love now concentrated in this sole object, became even painfully intense—but she was deeply pious, and strove against making an earthly idol. To fulfil the wishes of her departed husband and the ardent desire of her son, she gave her reluctant consent to his entering the Navy, but the agony she endured each time he left home, was most severe. The chilling silence, which followed his departure—the empty chair—the cheerful voice—the quick light footstep of youth—all hushed. Oh! how the loss of these would sink into her heart with a withering sensation, while every gust of wind created a pang indescribable. Fervently, at such times, were her prayers offered for his safe return—and pardon implored for want of more faith—and how often had she cause to learn the extreme mercy of that God whom she served in the many gracious answers she received.

When her little acts of charity, and her daily visits among the poor of her village were performed, she would return to her lonely home, where all her occupations were in some way associated with her beloved and absent son; his faithful dog was her constant companion—his books—his drawings—the smallest reminiscencies gathered together and carefully tended. And oh, when a letter would arrive to announce his speedy return, how gratefully would she hasten on the Sabbath day to pour forth her prayers and praise in the house of God. When sympathising neighbours would approach her on leaving it, to offer their congratulations—flocking around her, rejoicing that her Edward was coming,