

the public benefit. In the circle of home, they are neither felt nor exhibited."

The thrust was a sharp one, but it produced no apparent effect on lady Huntingdon, beyond imparting an additional degree of cold calmness to her tones, as she replied:

"They have at least enabled me, my lord, to bear at all times unruffled, your somewhat rude taunts and jests."

Lord Huntingdon felt the justice of the observation, and he rejoined:

"Well, Isabel, you are right there, and I did not really mean what I said; but you try my patience too severely sometimes, by your indiscriminate support of those provoking children."

"Nay; do not say children," exclaimed lady Huntingdon with a laugh, whose bitter sarcasm pierced Eva to the heart. "If your anger is excited in any way against Miss Huntingdon, do not fear that I will interpose to shield her."

"And I do not see why you should not, Isabel; for, after all, there is nothing either unamiable or disagreeable about her. True, I do not think I have spoken ten words to the child since her arrival; but she seems too quiet, in fact, too inanimate a being, to have afforded you any real grounds for the indifference, not to say the distaste, you display towards her."

"Any real cause! Do you not see that she, herself, her very existence, is a living reproach to me? How triumphantly now will my enemies dilate on my unwomanly neglect, my heartless cruelty, in abandoning her from infancy to the care of a comparative stranger, allowing her to grow up in untutored ignorance, in short, forgetting in fashionable frivolity, every duty of mother, parent and guardian. And all this, too, to be retailed against one who has hitherto enjoyed the proud title of an irreproachable wife and mother. Fancy, for a moment, the scornful exultation of my acquaintances, on being able to exclaim, after dwelling on the extent of Miss Huntingdon's ignorance, the odious awkwardness that will speak so plainly of her total ignorance of etiquette, of the rules of common good breeding: 'That is lady Huntingdon's only daughter!'"

"But, at least, the girl is very pretty, Isabel. Not even that unbecoming black dress she wears, can disguise it."

"I have already told you, my lord," was the harsh reply, "that she has not one single claim to beauty. Some few, indeed, might bestow on her the same admiration they would give to a wax doll: an insipid, light-haired puppet, with neither character, expression nor animation."

Lord Huntingdon, yielding in his turn to his companion's impetuosity, rejoined:

"Well; leaving looks aside, the gentleness of her appearance seems to indicate, that with a little attention, she might eventually become a companion, whose agreeable qualities would repay you for the anxieties and annoyances of which she will be a source for some time yet."

"Never!" said lady Huntingdon, impatiently rising, "Our intellects, our characters, are too widely dissimilar for that. My heart has never turned towards her with affection since her arrival, nor never will."

"Because that scape-grace of a son engrosses all the heart you have got," muttered her husband to himself as he turned away.

We will not attempt to analyze or describe the thoughts of the daughter, who with cheek pallid as marble, her very breathings hushed, had listened to every word of that heartless, that cruel dialogue. Her first emotion was one of passionate and paralyzing grief; but, after a time, other thoughts, dark, bitter, such as had never yet disturbed the childish purity of her soul, succeeded. Anger, rebellion, envy of her more favored brother, murmurs against Providence; all, it is true, vague, shadowy—yet, still there, tainting with their dark breath that inward mirror, which till then had reflected naught but the sinless imaginings of childhood. And still as she listened, her thoughts grew wilder and bitterer. Indistinct projects of escape, of flight from home, from the parents who were a living mockery of the name, flashed upon her; till at length her mind became a perfect chaos, retaining, however, in the tempest that shook it, the one all-absorbing thought of her mother's heartlessness, her cruelty. Her hand still resting on the page she had been studying, her eyes still turned to the door, whose slight opening had permitted her to hear so distinctly all that had passed; she remained motionless long after the voices had ceased, the speakers parted. She was interrupted by lady Huntingdon's maid, who entered to say that "Mr. Arlingford was down in the drawing-room, and that her lady had sent word for Miss Huntingdon to go down immediately."

The woman, as usual, employed on a double commission for her mistress, was in a violent hurry, and thus fortunately Eva's terribly agitated countenance escaped her notice. Scarcely conscious of what she was doing, she rose, and at the risk of encountering her mother, passed through the latter's sitting-room, instead of descending, according to her usual custom, by a side staircase. Most providentially, however, lady Huntingdon had retired to her own apartment to write a letter to her son, a duty ever followed by a fit of de-