

the tones of anger again, for they are terrible to me. For my sake forbear, and remember that as we hope for pardon and mercy, we must not sit in judgment upon others. Accept this loved hand in amity, and then I shall know the depth of your affection for me."

The feelings of the warm-hearted boy instantly softened. He sprang forward and returned the pressure of Sir Claude's hand, which Beatrice had placed in his, tears filling his eyes on discovering how pale and ill he was looking. Mrs. Annesley then intreated Beatrice to retire, as she seemed so very much exhausted.

"Do, my dearest love, she said, anxiously, "and then tomorrow you will be better able to enjoy the society of Sir Claude."

Beatrice resisted the advice, saying :

"Not yet, dear mamma ; spare me only a few more minutes, I entreat."

But Sir Claude, who painfully marked her pallid cheek and drooping figure, added his persuasions to those of her mother, which at once won her compliance. As she rose from her chair, Herbert offered to carry her up stairs, but was gently repulsed by Sir Claude.

"This is my right, Herbert," he said, "and one that I will not consent to relinquish."

"Ah, I see how it is," returned Herbert, in a reproachful tone, on perceiving Beatrice incline towards her husband ; "I shall be nobody now that you are returned ; before you came I was all in all to her."

"Do not pain me my brother !" returned poor Beatrice, shedding tears ; "never shall I forget your undeviating kindness to me when I so much needed it."

"Come, come this will never do," said Sir Claude, raising her in his arms and smiling. "Herbert, open the door. Obey your commanding officer, sir."

Beatrice kissed her hand to her parents, who, perceiving the happiness expressed in her sweet face as it now rested on the shoulder of her husband, mentally offered up their grateful thanks to God, that her mourning had so suddenly been changed into joy.

Sir Claude conveyed Beatrice to her own room, when placing her on a couch, he again knelt before her, while, in a voice choked by the emotion he felt, he said :

"And now that I once more find myself alone with you, my darling wife, tell me, for God's sake tell me, whether you really can forgive my barbarity on that dreadful night we parted ? Could you know what my sufferings have been since that period, I am sure you would pity me."

Such contrite language from him affected Beatrice considerably.

"Can you doubt it for a single moment, my own

dearest Claude ?" she replied, clasping her arms round his neck. "God knows how freely I would have forgiven far more, knowing how many provocations to anger I had given you in requital for all your kindness and affection."

"Not one that in any degree merited such treatment ; but I was mad—goaded on to desperation by a fiend in human form—nor was my own heart pure enough to understand the innocence of yours. My blessed wife, what sorrows have you known since I left you ! Too legibly are they traced on your angel face, that has haunted my dreams by day and by night, filling me with remorse. Is it possible that your heart beats as warmly towards me as it used to do ?"

"How can I convince you, my own beloved, words so feebly express all that is written here ?" and Beatrice laid his hand upon her heart, which was throbbing tumultuously.

He kissed her again and again, then rising, he said :

"I must not linger here ; it is cruel to you who need repose so much. Tomorrow I will tell you all my story, when perhaps I may not appear the cold-hearted wretch your parents now suppose me for deserting you at such a time," and he shuddered.

Beatrice clasped his hand in both hers, laying down her face upon it, as she murmured :

"Oh, Claude ! our children ! our darling Georgie and Harry !"

"Do not name them tonight !" he quickly rejoined, concealing his eyes with his hand ; "we can neither of us bear it yet. But, my Beatrice, we have a child ? She is living ?"

"Yes, thanks be to God ! else I must have died ! Would you like to see her ?"

"Not tonight, love, I have already detained you up far too long, and here comes Mrs. Golding to chide me for so doing."

"Nay, Sir Claude, not to chide," replied the kind-hearted nurse, gazing delightedly on them both. "I am only too happy to see you here ; but my lady had better go to bed, else Mrs. Annesley will scold us all."

Beatrice smiled, when Sir Claude, tenderly wishing her good night, withdrew, and returned to the drawing-room.

Rawlins was then summoned to undress her lady. She came, accompanied by Norris, who could not restrain the joy she felt at the change in the tide of affairs.

"I knew something wonderful was going to happen," she said ; "for it was only last night that I dreamt the house was on fire ; and this morning I put my cap on the wrong side out, the luckiest sign in the world. Dear me, but Sir Claude is a fine man surely."

"None ever doubted that, Norris," returned