

exhausted energies. I once knew a lady, a beautiful creature she was, who devoted, as I have described, to the gaities of the world, was in the habit of keeping laudanum on her toilet, which she would take as a stimulus before she went to a party. Alas, death was in all her smiles, and the painted victim of pleasure, sank into an untimely grave."

"But my dear sister is gay, is happy in reality," returned Belinda; "although I fear, she has never spent any one hour in serious meditation in her life; she inseparably unites religion with gloom, and its tenets with austerity; she attends church regularly and conforms to its ceremonies, but they engage not her heart; she escapes from them with a feeling of satisfaction that they are over, and an idea that she has been performing a meritorious act; yet I have rarely seen her spirits depressed, unless a very gloomy wet day, has, perhaps, deprived her of some promised pleasure."

"Has Marion ever been tried in the furnace of affliction?" I enquired.

"No."

"Then, we must pause until then, ere we can decide upon the merits of her philosophy."

"Oh, I trust I may never behold my dear gay-hearted sister unhappy," said the affectionate girl, warmly.

"Not if it were to prove the means of leading her to her Heavenly Father, my child?"

"Forgive me, I spoke in haste. Yes, to insure so happy a result, I would even be thankful for her tears. Yet, oh, my father," she continued fervently; "spare her as far as it is possible. Lead her SURELY, yet lead her gently."

On reaching the cabin of the poor widow, we found her all that Mr. Lindsay had described; resigned and patient, though heavily afflicted. She maintained her resolution to remain where she was; we endeavoured to show her the greater advantage of a removal; but when we found that by so doing we only added to her distress without changing her determination, we desisted. The view she had taken was, that it would seem to imply a want of faith in the Almighty, and would be a departure from the expressed wishes of her husband, and who could gainsay such reasoning. She expressed herself most grateful for our visit, and on our leaving her, besought us to repeat it, which we faithfully promised we would do.

On our return home, Belinda found the card of Captain Harvey Blanchard on the hall table; she carried it into the drawing-room.

"Dear Marion, has he then been here?" she asked with emotion.

"He has," replied her sister, who was practicing on the harp; "and until I saw his card, I quite forgot that the message he gave me last night for you was, that he would call to see you today."

"Oh, Marion, how could you be so unkind," said

poor Belinda, sinking into a chair, and bursting into tears; "how cold, how ungrateful he must think me. He did not then come in?"

"No, he galloped off immediately; but pray do not disturb me. Belinda, I am just surmounting a most difficult passage; what folly to weep for such a trifle, when you will see him tomorrow."

"Heartless girl," I could not forbear murmuring in a low tone, as I led the distressed Belinda from the room and retired with her to her own.

And now the morrow, the eventful morrow arrived. I confess I felt some curiosity to behold one of whom I had heard so much; but this was absorbed in my interest for dear Belinda, who came to me in a state of great agitation, as the hour approached for the expected arrival of the guests; we descended together to the drawing-room where we found Mrs. Harrington reclining on a fauteuil, looking as bewitching as a profusion of blond lace and rouge could make her. Mr. Harrington was pursuing his interminable study of the corn laws with his back to the fire, while Marion, beautifully dressed, sat at the table penning some pretty little note to one of her dear friends.

"Belinda, child, you look like a black crow amongst us," said Mrs. Harrington; "when do you mean to throw off that sable garb?"

Mr. Harrington raised his eyes from the newspaper and fixed them on his daughter.

"Never mind her dress," he returned, drawing her affectionately towards him; "she is a good and a kind girl, and I think is most becomingly attired."

Belinda pressed her lips on his cheek, while the tears which rose to her dove-like eyes expressed her thanks. A few strangers were now announced, to whom I was presented; among them Mr. and Mrs. Fortescue, whose names I had heard frequently mentioned. Each time that the door opened Belinda cast an anxious glance towards it; at length the clatter of swords resounded on the stone floor of the hall; her cheek turned so pale that I almost feared she would have fainted, when again the door was thrown wide, and Captain Harvey Blanchard, with two other officers, entered. His appearance, I had heard described as startling, and indeed no other word could so well express the effect it produced; so commanding, so beautiful was his face and mien, my gaze became rivetted. Most graciously was he received by Mrs. Harrington, who introduced him to her husband, and the reception he met from him was kind and cordial in the extreme; he addressed him upon the subject of India, and expressed his regret that he had not earlier made his acquaintance.

"But you must blame my little Bell for it," continued the good-natured man; for I never heard your name until the day after your departure."

Captain Blanchard smiled as he turned from him and looked round the room, when he perceived the