

his eyes, and coursed each other silently down his cheeks. Thoughts of the deepest sadness seemed passing through his mind during some moments; but checking the heavy sigh that rose in his breast, he rivetted his hands together, and looked towards heaven with an expression of placid submission, saying these words in a scarcely audible tone, though evidently addressed to those around,—

“Weeping endureth for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” “Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him; *but* weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.” *

These words fell upon the ear of Harry and Laura like a knell of death, for they now saw that Frank himself believed he was dying, and it appeared as if their last spark of hope expired when they heard this terrible dispensation announced from his own lips. He seemed anxious now that they should understand his full meaning, and receive all the consolation which his mind could afford, for he closed his eyes, and added in solemn accents,—

“I must have died at some time, and why not now? If I leave friends who are very dear on earth, I go to my chief best Friend in heaven. The whole peace and comfort of my mind rest

* Jeremiah xxii. 10.

on thinking of our Saviour's merits. Let us all be ready to say, 'The will of the Lord be done.' Think often, Harry and Laura, of those words we so frequently repeated to grandmamma formerly,—

“Take comfort, Christians, when your friends
In Jesus fall asleep;
Their better being never ends,
Why then dejected weep?

“Why inconsolable, as those
To whom no hope is given?
Death is the messenger of peace,
And calls “my” soul to heaven.”

Frank's voice failed, his head fell back upon the pillows, and he remained for a length of time with his eyes closed in solemn meditation and prayer, while Laura and Harry, unable so much as to look at each other, leaned upon the table, and wept in silence.

Laura felt as if she had grown old in a moment—as if life could give no more joy—and as if she herself stood already on the verge of the grave. It appeared like a dream that she had ever been happy, and a dreadful reality to which she was now awakened. All her love for Frank could not avert the stroke of death—all his attachment to her must now be buried in the grave—and the very tenderness they felt for each other only embittered the sorrow of this dreadful moment.

From that day, Harry and Laura, according to the advice of Uncle David, testified their affection for Frank, not by tears and useless lamentations,

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though these were not always to be controlled in private, but by the incessant, devoted attention with which they watched his looks, anticipated his wishes, and thought every exertion a pleasure which could in the slightest degree contribute to his comfort. Frank, on his part, spared their feelings, by often concealing what he suffered, and by speaking of his own death, as if it had been a journey on which he must prepare with readiness to enter.

Yet, with every desire to feel resigned, Frank himself was sometimes surprised out of his usual fortitude, especially when thinking that he must never more hope to see Lady Harriet, towards whom he cast many a longing and affecting thought, saying once, with deep emotion, "If I could only see grandmamma again, I should feel quite well." One evening, as he sat near an open window, gazing on the rich tints of twilight, and breathing with more than usual ease, a wandering musician paused with her guitar, and sang several airs with great pathos and expression. At length she played the tune of "Home! sweet home!" to which Frank listened for some moments with intense agitation, till, clasping his hands and bursting into tears, he exclaimed, in accents of powerful emotion,—

"Home! That happy home! Oh! never—never more—*my* home is in the grave."

Laura wept convulsively, while he added, in broken accents, "I shall still be remembered—

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still lamented—you must not love me too well, Laura—not as I love you, or your sorrow would be too great; but long hence, when Harry and you are happy together, surrounded with friends, think sometimes of one who must for ever be absent—who loved you better than them all—whose last prayer will be for you both. Oh! who can tell what my feelings are! I can do nothing now but cause distress and anguish to those who love me best."

Harry and Laura were surprised to find the fields and walks near London so very rural and beautiful, and to meet with much more simplicity and kindness among the common people than they had anticipated. The poorer neighbours, who became aware of their affliction, testified a degree of sympathy which frequently astonished them, and was often afterwards remembered with pleasure, one instance of which seemed peculiarly touching to Laura. Frank always suffered most acutely during the night, and seldom closed his eyes in sleep till morning; therefore she invariably remained with him, to beguile those weary hours; while any remonstrance on his part against so fatiguing a duty became a mere waste of words, as she only grew sadder and paler, saying, there would be time enough to take care of herself, when she could no longer be of use to him. The earliest thing that gave any relief to Frank's cough every day, generally was a tumbler of milk, warm from the cow, which had been ordered for him, and was