

ment. You must dance the first set of quadrilles with me."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Most seriously so."

"But, my sovereign lady, I have not danced for twenty years, and know as much about dancing quadrilles as an untaught bear. You must allow me to find a substitute"

"Indeed, I shall do no such thing. If you refuse to dance with me, I will sit still all the evening."

"Ah! Bradshawe, you are fairly in for it," said Mrs. Dunstanville; "and to lose your heart at your time of life, would be a sad affair. All the boys in the parish would laugh at you."

"Those who knew the cause, would justify the folly of the deed," returned the old lawyer. "Older men than me have worshipped at such a shrine, and been forgiven. But here we are at Mrs. Ponsonby's splendid mansion."

"Rosamond had felt her spirits rising, while chatting with her good old friend; and when he helped her from the coach, she looked both gay and happy."

With the superannuated beauty on one arm, and the charming young belle upon the other, Mr. Bradshawe forced his way through the crowded ball-room, to the seat occupied by the mistress of the house; a matron still graceful and blooming.

Mrs. Ponsonby received Rosamond with the most lively demonstrations of regard, and calling her son, a fine lad of fifteen, to her side, who was spending his holidays at home, she introduced him to her lovely guest. The boy gazed with admiring wonder at the beautiful girl, and blushing himself like a girl, asked if she would honor him with her hand for the quadrille that was just forming.

"Well done, my boy!" said Mr. Bradshawe laughing. "I see you do not lack ambition or taste either, when you would run off with the brightest rose in the room. The young lady is my partner."

"Yours?" cried the disappointed urchin. "Do you dance?"

"To be sure I do, when the gout will let me. What say you, fair Rosamond, will you take this curly pated Henry for my substitute?"

"With pleasure," said Rosamond, giving the delighted boy her hand. "From youth to age is but a step."

"A long stride, if you please, young lady—but away with you, and let me see how well young Harry supplies my place."

All eyes were fixed upon that fair girl and boy, as they gracefully threaded the mazes of the

dance. Rosamond enjoyed the consciousness of having pleased her youthful partner; and while he looked up to her, as to a divinity, she smiled down upon him with a countenance beaming with goodness and benevolence. The eyes that had never wandered from him, were now raised to those of her *vis-à-vis*. The color fled from the happy face, her lips quivered, and big tears obscured her sight, when she felt her hand once more clasped in that of Dunstanville Sternfield, and met the cold, haughty glance, and the still colder inclination of the head, which recognised her, without admitting the least claim of friendship or sympathy.

A murmur ran through the room that Miss Sternfield, the beautiful heiress, had fainted. There was a great bustle in the centre of the splendid saloon; a sound like a half-suppressed convulsive sob, as a lady was partly carried from the gay scene, into an adjoining room, and the music again struck up, and the dance went on merry as before.

Seated in a large arm chair, at an open window, through which the moon poured a flood of silvery light upon her death-pale countenance, reclined the inanimate form of the still insensible Rosamond. The young boy, Henry Ponsonby, was kneeling at her feet, bathing her wrists with salvolatile, while his mother supported the drooping head upon her shoulder, and near her, leaning against the window frame, with a face as pale as her own, his dark eyes bent mournfully upon her death-like countenance, stood Edgar Hartland. There was a moisture in his eye-lashes, a quick, quivering motion in his compressed lips, that told of suffering as deep, as acute as her own; but, when the color again faintly dawned on that alabaster cheek, and the blue eyes opened wide and wild, and the bright tears gushed freely down, and the deep drawn sigh of returning consciousness, told that life and sorrow were again at work in that fragile breast, he had vanished, and Rosamond awoke to the reality of the frightful vision of the night among strangers.

"I have caused you great trouble," she said. "This fit was quite unexpected. I felt so well—so happy."

"The room was so hot," exclaimed the gentle boy. "But you are better now—we shall soon be able to dance again."

"Not to-night," said Rosamond, trembling lest the cause of her disorder should be known. "My head aches, and I must go home. But you must come to Bramby, and we will have our dance out, and a good romp in the garden. Will not that do as well?"

"Ah! but you will not be dressed in diamonds,