

tion, but stopped short, unable to mention Delmour's name, and consequently, Markham's persecution. She, however, ended, as she begun, by exclaiming with warmth;

"You cannot imagine how I dislike him."

Mr. Morton, who had entirely misinterpreted her embarrassment, with difficulty preserved his gravity, as he said;

"Here is the object of your hatred approaching. I wonder if you will alter your system of receiving him, which, I must say, is little in accordance with your words."

As he had said, Sir George was advancing, her stepmother with whom he had been dancing, on his arm; after a moment's talk, he asked her hand for the quadrille just forming, but she coldly prayed to be excused, pleading fatigue. Not at all disconcerted, he requested it for the next, and Amy, who saw a very ominous frown gathering on her father's brow, consented with as good a grace as she could assume. She was now free, at least, from any private annoyance on Markham's part, as the conversation was general, but she could not help the indirect compliments, the courteous speeches, with which he still pursued her. At length the next dance commenced, and unwillingly, indeed, she stood up with her hated partner. Now that the momentary flush of excitement was gone, fatigue and mortification had rendered her cheeks pale as marble; and some better feeling seemed to animate him, for he exclaimed, after a pause:

"I hope, Miss Morton, I have not offended you, by my unmeaning railery. If so, I entreat forgiveness."

But Amy, gentle as she was, could not so easily forget the pain he had inflicted on her; and her reply, though she strove to render it as soft as possible, plainly shewed she had not yet forgiven it. For some time his manner was subdued and respectful; but piqued to see how little effect his altered demeanor produced on his companion's frigid manner, he turned to Miss Aylmer, who was in the same set, and exclaimed:

"Did your uncle, Capt. Harcourt, sail in the *Amphitrite*?"

"Certainly."

"Your brother did not accompany him?"

"No, but his great favorite, young Mr. Delmour, went with him."

This was what Markham wanted, and he continued, in a jesting tone:

"I fear you are very hard-hearted. You take the departure of one of your most devoted admirers, as if it were a matter of perfect indifference."

"So it is," she replied; "but, I assure you, he is no admirer of mine."

This was strictly true, for he had never danced with her but twice in his life. He had been frequently at her house, but then, it was to see her uncle, who was commander of his ship. This, Markham well knew, but he also well understood the young lady he was speaking to, and he resumed:

"Surely, Miss Aylmer, you will not pretend to say those frequent visits were not for you! Oh! come, acknowledge,—Delmour set you an example you should follow; he was faithful to the last."

Miss Aylmer's chief characteristic was vanity, and she made it a point never to refuse a conquest, real or imaginary; therefore, well pleased at Markham's supposed mistake, she resolved not to deceive him, and, with a light laugh, turned away. Fortunately for Amy's overcharged heart, the dance concluded, and she retired to her seat. She resolutely refused to join another, alleging that she was too much fatigued, and certainly, her cheek, huesed as ashes, supported her excuse. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Morton interfered with her determination, and she had the sad satisfaction of being able inwardly to review in her mind, without interruption, all she had heard of Delmour's inconstancy. Sir George was soon after dancing with Miss Aylmer, who, being an heiress as well as an acknowledged *belle*, it was not his policy to neglect. With a thrill of pleasure, the first she had known, during that long and wretched night, she heard the carriage announced, and so great was her impatience to leave the scene of her vexations, she was cloaked and veiled before her young stepmother, who was as blooming and as fresh as she was at the beginning of the evening, had yet commenced attiring herself.

At length, all were ready, and they descended to the hall. The indefatigable Sir George was waiting at the door. Mrs. Morton, with a sweet smile, prayed him to be no longer a stranger.

"I shall do myself the pleasure of calling to-morrow," was his reply; and he added in a lower tone, as he assisted Amy to enter, "I shall then endeavour, Miss Morton, to make my peace with you."

To her great joy, the door finally closed, and sinking back in the thick cushions of the vehicle, she gave full vent to the tears that she had with such difficulty repressed during the evening. Mrs. Morton, after a few moments, fell asleep, and her husband supposing, from Amy's silence, she had followed her example, forebore speaking.