

after this conversation, master Walter went to the military school, and Miss Ella accompanied her mother to Paris in order to finish her education, and I was placed under the head game-keeper to learn the art of detecting snares and catching poachers.

I filled the post assigned me with such credit to myself, and so completely to the satisfaction of my master, that, after a few years, I was promoted to be head game-keeper, on a salary of one hundred pounds per annum, and the use of this cottage and farm, rent free.

My old passion for being a gentleman revived with double force, and though I had not seen Miss Ella for years, my boyish attachment for her was as strong as ever. I determined to devote all my spare time to acquire a knowledge of books, and to save all I could from an income which ought to have been more than adequate to my wants. But I found that my desire to dress better, and appear superior to my comrades, involved considerable expense, and that keeping a handsome horse, and carrying a handsome gun, could not be accomplished without spending more money than I could well afford.

At that time my personal appearance was greatly in my favor. When dressed in my velvet shooting jacket, white cords and top boots, with my green hunting cap placed carelessly on my head, I fancied myself what many said I was, "a handsome young fellow."

I had just completed my twenty-third year, when my old flame made her appearance once more at the hall. Miss Ella was no longer a pretty child, she was a beautiful and accomplished woman; and a feeling of despair, mingled with the admiration with which I regarded her, as she rode past me in the plantations accompanied by a young gentleman and an elderly lady. The gentleman was a younger brother, whom I had never seen; the lady was her mother. Miss Ella was mounted upon a fiery horse, which she sat to perfection. I raised my cap as the party rode by.

"Who is that handsome young man?" asked the elder lady. "He looks like a gentleman."

"Oh! that is my uncle's game-keeper, Noah Cotton. He has grown very handsome, but what a name—Noah; it is enough to drown all pretensions to good looks."

"How came you to know him, Ella?"

"Oh! you know that my uncle is not over particular. An aristocrat with regard to his game, and any infringement in his rights on that score, but a perfect democrat in his familiarity with his inferiors. This Noah used to be our play-fellow; and would you believe it, mamma, the saucy lad

had the impudence, not only to fall in love with me, but the audacity to tell me so!"—

"And what did you do?"

"Oh! of course, I never spoke to him again. It is a pity he is not a gentleman. He is a handsome fellow."

I stood rooted to the spot where the party had passed me, but a sudden curve in the road, although it hid me from their view, brought them close to the place, and enabled me to hear distinctly every word they said.

I was flattered by the commendations passed upon my person, but almost stung to madness by the contemptuous manner in which Miss Ella spoke.

I saw her many times during that visit to the hall, but beyond raising my cap respectfully when she passed, no word of any former acquaintance dropped from my lips. Once or twice, I thought from her manner, and the earnest way in which she regarded me, that she almost wished me to speak to her. In helping her to mount her horse one day in the park, our eyes met, and she blushed very deeply, and flung down her veil, while her hand trembled as it lay for a moment in my grasp. Trifling as these circumstances were, they gave birth to the most extravagant hopes, and filled me with a sort of ecstasy. I almost fancied that she loved me. Alas, I knew little of the coquetry of woman's nature, or that a girl of her rank and fortune would condescend to notice a poor lad like me, to gratify her own vanity and love of admiration.

I went home intoxicated with delight, and that night I dreamt that I found a pot of gold in one of the plantations, and that Miss Ella had consented to become my wife. My vision of happiness was doomed to fade. The next day Mrs. Carlos and her son and daughter left the hall, and I did not even see her before she went.

For weeks after her departure I moped about in a listless, dispirited manner. Some desperadoes had broken into the preserves and carried off a large quantity of game, and Mr. Carlos severely reprimanded me for my neglect.

This made me return with double diligence to my business, and, after watching for a few nights, I had every reason to believe that the chief depredator was no other than my old enemy, Bill Martin, who, absent for several years with a gang of gipsies, had suddenly made his appearance in the village.

A desperate, low blackguard he had become, and as usual, his old hatred to me was manifested by the lowest personal abuse whenever we met. My hatred to him was too deep to find vent in words. I