

the crowd perceived her embarrassment, and springing forward to the rescue, gracefully presented it. That gentleman was Henry St. John.

Courteously saluting Alice's companion, he turned to him, as if to address a few words, but the latter, with a stiff bow, passed out. Mr. St. John was equally unsuccessful in an effort which he made to attract the glance of Alice, which was instantly averted from him. In the adjoining apartment they encountered Mrs. Graham, who, at the centre of a small *coterie*, was vehemently discussing the merits and demerits of the last new Opera.

"Why, where have you been all this time, Miss Sydenham?" immediately exclaimed the lady, on the entrance of her charge. "I have been searching for you in every direction."

"Either your researches did not extend beyond the music room, or you will soon require spectacles, madam, for Miss Sydenham has never left the adjoining room, the whole night."

Mrs. Graham drew herself up, with a lightning glance, but the hostess, who at the moment joined the group, foreseeing the impending storm, instantly interposed.

"Ah! my sweet young friend!" addressing Alice, after bestowing a beaming smile on her companion, "I hope you have enjoyed yourself."

"Vastly, madam; I can vouch for the truth of that," drily rejoined the old man, who seemed to have taken on himself the task of answering for Alice on all occasions. "Complete neglect, entire isolation, is so delightful, not to speak of the facility thus afforded, of indulging in philosophical meditations, undisturbed by such vanities as dancing or attention. Oh! 'twas all doubtless charming for a girl of sixteen."

Mrs. Belmont would not see the very palpable cut thus given her, but continued to chat pleasantly with him, whilst Alice glided after Mrs. Graham, to the dressing room. It was crowded with ladies, all eagerly conversing together, discussing the pleasures of the night, or planning future amusements. A group of these immediately surrounded Mrs. Graham, and Alice was again left, as she had been the greater part of the evening, entirely alone. She was soon cloaked and veiled, and leaning against the large mirror, at the deserted end of the apartment, where she had retired herself, she gazed sadly, upon the pale, haggard face it reflected. But her thoughts dwelt not long there; they wandered soon back to the bitter events of the night, the slights, the humiliations showered on one whose birth was equal to the proudest there, whose only inferiority was in the paltriest of earth's distinctions, wealth.

Suddenly the voice of Mrs. Graham sharply exclaimed.

"Miss Sydenham, are you ready yet?"

Conscious that her pre-occupation had been observed, the latter quickly turned, but as she did so, she heard Miss Aberton whisper to her neighbour.

"'Tis cruel of Mrs. Graham to disturb so blissful a reverie. We are all fond of meditating on our conquests."

Alice, irritated beyond expression, fixed her eyes upon the speaker, with a glance of such profound, unutterable contempt, that the lady, to the secret delight of her companions, with whom she was no favorite, turned away her head, in silent embarrassment. Arrived at the landing place, Mrs. Graham stopped to exchange a few parting words with a friend, whilst her young companion shrank timidly behind her. Some time after, her chaperone's carriage was announced, when Mr. St. John, who had been leaning listlessly over the staircase, sprang forward, and with his most fascinating smile, "begged the honour of handing Miss Sydenham in."

Alice raised her eyes in wondering astonishment, at this unaccountable change, when she suddenly encountered the glance of her kind friend of the evening. Instantly comprehending his quick, but meaning look, she coldly thanked Mr. St. John, for the intended favour," and with a stiff bow, turned away.

To fill the measure of the latter's mortification, the old man unceremoniously pushed past him, exclaiming:

"'Tis rather late to renew your acquaintance with Miss Sydenham now," and presenting his arm to Alice, they moved off, leaving him biting his lips with vexation.

"St. John, do tell us who that old bear is?" asked a fashionable looking young man, who had witnessed the whole scene, with very lively demonstrations of satisfaction.

"Some rich old Hottentot, whom my sister made acquaintance with, during her travels. She says he is worth thousands. In payment alone, of some kind of forfeit, or jesting bet, he presented her with a brooch worth at the least eighty guineas."

"Well! he is a fiery old gentleman, and I suspected it was something of that sort, when I witnessed the lamb-like gentleness, with which you suffered his onset. St. John, St. John, gold is then thy god."

"A god whom we all worship, you among the rest," rejoined the other, peevishly, as he turned away. Meanwhile Alice and her friend had reached the carriage, in which Mrs. Graham was