

"How do you like my new dress?" she asked with sparkling eyes. "Is it not superb?"

"It is really very handsome," replied her husband, looking proudly upon her.

"It should be," she quickly rejoined. "This Brussels lace," and as she spoke, she raised the rich trimming which might have adorned the robe of a duchess, "cost me an immense sum. It has left me actually penniless. However, I shall have the satisfaction of outshining all there. But do you not perceive that something is wanting to my toilette?"

"No, indeed, 'tis perfect."

"Really, 'tis astonishing, how blind you are," she said somewhat pettishly. "Do you not see that I have no ornaments in my hair?"

"Why, to speak truly, I never observed it; but I assure you, Louisa, your curls look far better free and unconfined as they are at present. You remember —."

"Oh! spare me! that hackneyed quotation of 'beauty when unadorned, is adorned the most.' 'Tis mighty well in theory, but not so admirable in practice. But, do you recollect the Countess of Neville—how well she looked the other night at Lady Heathcott's?"

"Yes, she was one of the most elegant looking women in the room."

"Well! did you remark her splendid diamond tiara? It was that that made her look so queen-like."

"I believe you pointed it out to me," innocently rejoined Mr. Morton. "It was really very becoming."

"Then would you not like to see your wife rivaling the Countess of Neville?" she said, changing her tone to one of winning sweetness? "Do, dear Morton, give me a tiara like hers for to-morrow evening."

Her husband actually started, and exclaimed with an air of grave surprise:

"What! more jewelry, Louisa? Where are your pearls, and that set of rubies I bought for you last week at your own request, and then, the costly diamond bracelet I gave you a fortnight previously?"

"Oh! I remember them well; but you will not surely refuse to gratify me in this request. I promise not to ask you for anything else for a long time."

"'Tis utterly impossible. Reflect for a moment on the immense sum those jewels will cost. Had you not purchased the last set I might have done it, but now 'tis out of my power."

"Then you will not give it to me?"

"I would if I could, but I have not sufficient ready money; and surely out of all your orna-

ments you can select some becoming enough to wear."

"Of that I am the best judge, Mr. Morton," she answered, her dark eyes kindling with passion; but let me tell you I find your excuse for refusing me a paltry jewel, very improbable. I know but little of your affairs, for of course you keep them as secret as possible from your wife; still, I am not quite as ignorant as you suppose. How are the revenues of your vast estate in Dorsetshire employed?"

Mr. Morton felt there was to be a scene, and for once he determined to remain firm; he therefore coolly replied:

"Where does the money that keeps up your establishment, pays your numerous retinue, opera box, and carriages, come from?"

"That is very well," she triumphantly rejoined, "but it does not account for the large yearly rents you receive from Hillingdon Manor."

"Your expensive entertainments, costly dress, jewelry, and unceasing demands for pocket money, can best account for that."

"Since you have so satisfactorily answered for the others, perhaps you can find some equally plausible pretext for the outlay of that estate in Scotland, which, if I mistake not, your agent once said in my presence, was a very valuable one."

"That is my daughter's, exclusively. She inherits it in right of her mother, and with that, Mrs. Morton, neither you nor I have anything to do."

This did not tend to appease her, and, trembling with anger, she exclaimed:

"I care not where the money comes from, but answer me definitely, am I to have those jewels or not?"

"I have already answered you."

"Then, till I obtain them," she passionately rejoined, "I shall not leave this house. You shall go alone to Mrs. Sutherland's to-morrow night, and let them know 'twas your despicable meanness that prevented my accompanying you. Hortense shall have this dress," and as she spoke, she tore the rich trimming from her robe and flung it away.

"Then be it so," said her husband, who with some difficulty had preserved his self-command, "You are your own mistress to go or to stay as you think proper; but since we are on this subject, let me tell you, Louisa, your expenses for the last two months have been really enormous. Do not think for a moment I wish to curtail your pleasures or amusements. Far from it; but still you must learn to be a little more economical,