

were the improvements he suggested in the antiquated building, and ample were the gardens and pleasure grounds, he laid out in his mind's eye, when he should become the possessor of the Brook Farm. But these subjects were soon exhausted, and his thoughts returned to Mildred. "She is a splendid creature, mother. I am sure Captain Netherby is greatly struck with her. It would be a capital match, I can tell you. He is heir to a fine estate in Yorkshire, and an old aunt left him last year, a large property in the funds."

"He is a handsome man, my son—but too old for Mildred."

"Too old! Fiddlesticks! his age does not exceed forty. He is in the very prime of life. But, mother, what is the matter with Mildred? Is she ill—or unhappy? Did you remark how suddenly she changed her beautiful color, for a deathly paleness, and complained of a head-ache. I don't like this."

"Mildred is a foolish girl," returned Mrs. Rosier, glancing cautiously around the room, as she spoke, "and is more likely to mar, than make a fortune. I am so glad that you are home. For I think you will be able to put a stop to this nonsense."

"What do you mean?" said the young man, his fine, clear brow, contracting into a severe frown. "No low attachment, I hope?"

"Hush! hush! Sydney, don't speak so loud. I will not tell you any thing about it without your promise to be moderate. You were always such a passionate boy, that I am half afraid of you as a man. Mildred is very young, and very sensitive. Harsh measures or harsh language would have a very bad effect upon her mind, and would only serve to strengthen the unfortunate affection which she entertains for a very worthless object."

"Come, mother, cut short this long preface, and let me know the worst at once. You women have such a round about way of easing your mind of any burden, that one gets tired before the tale begins."

In a voice scarcely above a whisper, Mrs. Rosier communicated to her indignant son, all that she knew concerning poor Mildred's unfortunate love affair, nor had the indolent, good-natured mother, the least idea of the storm which she had gathered over her own head. The proud, ambitious young sailor, was in a perfect ecstasy of rage. He reviled both his mother and sister in no measured terms; and vowed, that he would take summary vengeance upon the vile seducer—for so he designated the smuggler—who had basely inveigled an innocent unsuspecting child into his snare.

"But you, mother, are alone to blame in this!" he cried, pacing to and fro, in hot anger.

"Mr. Sydney, how could I help it?"

"How could you suffer a beautiful girl to wander about by herself, exposing her, unprotected, to the lawless gaze of a ruffian like that? Oh! mother, mother! I cannot excuse you for not taking more care of your daughter."

Poor Mrs. Rosier answered this appeal by a flood of tears, and secretly accused herself of imprudence and folly, in making Sydney acquainted with this page in his young sister's history. It was just at this critical moment, that the door unclosed, and the fair culprit re-entered the room.

"Oh! I am glad the strange gentleman is gone," she cried, running up to her brother. "We shall now have you entirely to ourselves. But how is this, (and she drew back in evident surprise). You look angry, Sydney, and my dear mother is in tears. What is wrong—who has offended you?"

"My mother has been telling me strange tales of you, miss"—(sailors when angry, are so fond of that repulsive word). "It is enough to call up the blood in one's face, to find that a sister who should be the pride and ornament of her family, is likely to disgrace herself and us. Is it possible," he continued, grasping her arm, "that a girl who looks so modest and simple, is so far lost to maiden shame, that she can give her company to a notorious scoundrel, whom we are sent by government to hunt down like a noxious beast, and destroy, for the well being of society? How can you justify to your own conscience, such conduct as this?"

"I shall not attempt it," said Mildred, struggling to release herself from his grasp; but he held her fast. "I have not deserved this harsh treatment, and I will not put up with it from you or any one else."

"You won't—you have still to learn, that I am master here. That I have a lawful right to question your conduct and restrain your actions. So, my little vixen! you may bid adieu to all your moonlight walks and solitary rambles, unless I or my mother accompany you. Upon your peril, dare to leave the house! Nay, you need not smile contemptuously, and toss your head—I will not be trifled with. You must obey me, or I shall put an end to the matter at once, by locking you up in a back chamber, and keeping the key of the door myself."

"You had better try it!" said the provoking girl—a spirit of defiance rising up strongly in her heart. "It is not injurious words or injurious actions, which will tempt me to give up the man I love. If you seek to win my confidence, or ex-