

correctly—of nice sweethearts; but a nice footman! Of all the nondescript animals we meet with in travelling through the great human menagerie, called the world, a footman belongs to the most degraded class. As regards his independence, he is far inferior to the dog. That noble quadruped at least possesses a coat of his own; but the human biped must wear the harlequin dress which suits his master's fancy."

"My dear Mildred, you must repress that satirical vein of yours," said her mother; "it does not become one so young. Try to collect your thoughts and fix them for once upon serious subjects;" and, sinking back in the carriage, the good lady endeavoured to assume the most mournful countenance imaginable. Mildred looked inexpressibly droll, but dared not laugh outright, as she did not wish to wound her mother's feelings; and her thoughts were soon travelling back to the old ruined city; and finally halted in the vaults of the grey priory. What they wanted there, or with whom she was busily engaged in an imaginary conversation, is best known to herself; but so engrossed was she with her visionary companion, that night had shut in the wet dreary day, and the coach had stopped before the iron gates of the lodge before Mildred started from her fit of castle building.

The steps of the vehicle were slowly lowered, and the footman once more presented himself; and stretching out his arm, uttered in the same solemn tone as before—"Ladies, descend."

Without accepting his proffered aid, Mildred sprang down the steps, and bounded over the gravel walk; she was met at the front door by Miss Stainer, who received the giddy girl in her arms.

"Dear Miss Rosier, I am so happy to see you."

"Don't call me Miss Rosier; I hate that dull, formal Miss. I mean to get married as soon as I can, if only to get rid of that title—Miss. It puts me in mind of school days: if the governess was angry with me it was always Miss: if I could not say my lesson, 'Miss, you have been a very idle girl'; if I rent my frock in a bramble bush, 'Miss, how careless you are: Miss, I'll tell your mamma,' and so on, through all the chapter of accidents that could happen to a romping girl, who loved play better than work."

"Well, you shall be my dear Mildred, then," whispered Charlotte, as she led the way up stairs; "if you will only promise to do as you would be done by, and call me plain Charlotte."

"You must not look so grave, then," said Mildred; "what melancholy countenances you all have. Your very servants look like nutes at a funeral. Do you really think it is a sin to laugh?"

"I don't know," replied Charlotte; "mamma says so; and were you one of us, you would feel little inclination to give way to mirth."

"I should be very sorry to be one of you," said Mildred, "if that is really the case. St. Paul, and you will allow him to be good authority, says, 'Rejoice ever more.' Religion, as I understand it, should render people happy instead of miserable."

"I thought so once," returned Charlotte, with a sigh.

"What has made you alter your opinion?"

"Experience."

"Perhaps you are in the wrong, after all. Falsehood so often looks like truth, that it requires wiser heads than ours to determine what is right or wrong; but this, without being much of a theologian, I firmly believe, that truth cannot contradict itself, and never looks like falsehood."

"It is a mystery," said Charlotte, "and the subject is one of too great importance to treat lightly: It has made me very unhappy, and I once thought as little about it as you do, Mildred; but we were not sent into the world to follow our own inclinations, and do as we please. If we would win heaven we must be prepared to give up all that is near and dear to us on earth." She sighed deeply, then turning quickly to Mildred, said—"Those who are predestined to be saved, will be saved. As to the rest they are all blinded. I feel I belong to the latter class; may you, dear girl, be found in the former."

"You surely do not hold that dreadful creed!" returned Mildred, anxiously gazing upon the pale countenance of Charlotte, whose dark eyes were at that moment flashing with a wild unearthly fire.

"It is written in the book—it must be true," said Charlotte. "But come, let me introduce you to some of the elect; those who have been accepted and are beyond the power of temptation."

Shuddering, she knew not why, and half doubting the sanity of her fair young companion, Mildred followed her down stairs, and was formally introduced to the colonel and his friends. Tea was upon the table, and after a very long grace from a Mr. Jonas Death, they were duly arranged round the evening board.

The lofty spacious apartment was dimly lighted by two tall wax candles. The fire burnt gloomily, and the heavy dark green damask curtains which concealed the windows, and fell in massy folds to the floor, gave a funeral aspect to the scene. Mrs. Stainer, arrayed with primitive neatness, presided at the table, which was covered with a plain but substantial meal. There were no cakes, nor sweetmeats, to tempt the appetites of the dainty or luxurious. Good bread, captains' biscuits,