

"Now, take my harp, if you please, and be as careful as possible of branches, and don't stumble." She uttered this as if she were giving Jim his evening lesson: and then with a sudden cry she laughed out: "Oh! but I haven't played you your tune, and you must have your tune!"

Forthwith she stript the harp half bare, and throwing a propitiatory bright glance at her audience on the other side of her, she commenced thrumming a kind of Giles Scroggins, native British, beer-begotten air, while Jim smeared his mouth and grinned, as one who sees his love dragged into public view, and is not the man to be ashamed of her, though he hopes you will hardly put him to the trial.

"This is his favourite tune, that *he* taught *me*," she emphasized to the company. "I play to him every night, for a finish; and then he takes care not to knock my poor harp to pieces and tumble about."

The gentlemen were amused by the Giles Scroggins air, which she had delivered with a sufficient sense of its lumping fun and leg-for-leg jollity, and they laughed and applauded; but the ladies were silent after the performance, until the moment came to thank her for the entertainment she had afforded them: and then they broke into gentle smiles, and trusted they might have the pleasure of hearing her another night.

"Oh! just as often and as much as you like," she said, and first held her hand to Arabella, next to Cornelia, and then to Adela. She seemed to be hesitating before the gentlemen, and when Wilfrid raised his hat, she was put to some confusion, and bowed rather awkwardly, and retired.

"Good night, miss!" called Mr. Pericles.

"Good night, sir!" she answered from a little distance, and they could see that she was there emboldened to drop a proper curtesy in accompaniment.

Then the ladies stood together and talked of her, not with absolute enthusiasm. For, "Was it not divine?" said Adela; and Cornelia asked her if she meant the last piece; and, "Oh, gracious! not that!" Adela exclaimed. And then it was discovered how their common observation had fastened on the boot-lace; and this vagrant article became the key to certain speculations on her condition and character.