

"I hope you have been agreeably entertained. Dr. Lacey," said Julia, in an ironical tone.

"I assure you I have," said he warmly. "I do not remember having passed so pleasant an evening for a long, long time."

"I dare say not; Fanny is usually very interesting," was Julia's contemptuous reply, and as Mr. Wilmot just then took his leave, she very haughtily left the room, and went up stairs, muttering to herself, "Foiled for the first time in my life."

From this time nothing of particular importance occurred for two or three weeks, except that Dr. Lacey seemed each day to grow fonder of Fanny, which greatly annoyed Mrs. Carrington and Julia, both of whom spared no pains to make Fanny appear in as bad a light as possible. But Dr. Lacey understood these manoeuvres, and whenever they were present, seemed to take delight in being very attentive to Fanny. He ardently desired to see the father of the two girls, and ere long his wish was gratified. But of this we will speak in another chapter.

CHAPTER V.

THE FALSE-HEARTED, AND THE BROKEN-HEARTED.

JULIA and Fanny had been gone from home about four weeks, when Mr. Middleton suddenly determined "to go and see his gals" and bring them home. Accordingly he "fixed up right smart," as he thought, which meant that he took off his beard and put on "a bran new suit of jeans." He preferred driving his own carriage, so he set off all alone for Frankfort.

It was Friday morning, and as his daughters were in school, he stalked into Mrs. Crane's parlor to wait for them. Spying the piano, he sat down to it, and commenced producing a series of unearthly sounds, not altogether unlike the fashionable music of the present day. Mrs. Carrington chanced to be crossing the hall, and hearing the noise from the parlor, looked in. As her eye fell upon the strange looking, giant form of Mr. Middleton, she uttered a very delicate scream, and as she just then saw Dr. Lacey entering the house, she staggered back a few paces, and tried to faint very gracefully! But the Doctor caught her in his arms just in time to restore her to consciousness!

Mr. Middleton now came towards them, exclaiming "Lightning guns! what's to pay now? Skeeered at me, are you, Madam or Miss, whichever you be? I won't hurt a hair of your soft skull!"

"Ugh-u-n," said Mrs. Carrington, shrinking from him in disgust, as he advanced towards her, and laid his large hand on her head, "just to see," as he said, "if she were made of any thing besides jewellery, curls and paint."

At this allusion to her brilliant color, Mrs. Carrington relieved Dr. Lacey from the delightful duty of supporting her, and disappeared up the stairs, saying in no very gentle tones "What an old brute!"

"Fire away thar," called out Mr. Middleton. "I am an old brute, I s'pose."

"But your right name is Mr. Middleton, I conclude," said Dr. Lacey.

Mr. Middleton started and answered, "How

d'ye know that? Just as you'd know his Satanic Majesty, if he should appear to you?"

"Something upon that principle," said Dr. Lacey, laughing, "but," he continued, "I am glad to see you, Mr. Middleton. I suppose you have come to visit your daughters."

"Yes, and to take them home and let their mother and the rest of the blacks see them," answered Mr. Middleton; then after a pause he added, "They'll be right glad to see me, I reckon, or at least Sunshine will."

"Who is Sunshine?" asked Dr. Lacey.

"Well now," said Mr. Middleton, "here you've lived with 'em four weeks, and don't know that I call one Tempest and t'other Sunshine, and if you've any wit, you'll know which is Sunshine."

Just then a voice was heard to exclaim, "There, I told you father was here. I hear him now talking about Sunshine," and Fanny rushed in, and throwing her arms around her father's neck, kissed again and again his rough cheek, while he suddenly felt the need of his red and yellow handkerchief, and muttered something about the 'roads' being so infernal dusty that they made a fellow's eyes smart! Then turning to Julia, who still stood in the door, he said, "Come, Tempest, none of your pranks! Come here and shake your old pap's paw. You needn't be afeared of this young spark, for he knows I'm your pap, and he hain't laughed at me, neither." So Julia advanced, and shook her father's hand with a tolerable good grace.

"I'm come for you to go home and see the folks," said Mr. Middleton; "so you pick up some of your duds,—and mind not to take a cussed band-box,—and after dinner we'll start for home."

"It wants an hour or dinner time," said Julia, "and as we are not hungry, we can start in a few moments, if you like."

"Fury-ation," said Mr. Middleton, "I wonder if we can. Well, start on then afoot, if you're in such a hurry. I shan't budge an inch till I've had my dinner; besides, I want to see Mr. Wilmot."

Julia saw that she must submit to the mortification of seeing her father at Mrs. Crane's dinner-table, and with a beating heart she heard the bell summon them to the dining-room. Mrs. Carrington did not appear;—her nerves had received too great a shock,—and for that Julia was thankful. Dr. Lacey sat by her father, and paid him every possible attention.

"Will you take soup, Mr. Middleton?" asked Mrs. Crane.

"What kind of soup? Beef soup, or mud-turkle?"

"It is vermicelli," said Mrs. Crane, hardly able to keep her face straight.

"Vermifuge—vermifuge," repeated Mr. Middleton; "That's almighty queer stuff to make soup on. No, I'm 'bleeged to you, I ain't in need of that ar medicine just now."

Julia reddened, while Fanny burst into a laugh and said, "Father isn't much used to French soups, I think."

"Use your napkin, Fatho," softly whispered Julia.

"What shall I use that for?" said he. "My trousers are all tobaker spit now, and grease won't hurt 'em any how. Hallo! here waiter,