

"The Reluctant Bride." It delineated to the life, costume and attitudes perfect, a young woman, pale and trembling with aversion, and even disgust, on her face, kneeling at the altar, beside a dark looking man, who held a ring in the act to put it on her finger. An old stern looking person, in the guise of her parent, was giving her hand into the keeping of the other.

The doors closed for a few moments, and opened upon the second *tableau*; it was called, "Unhappy Wedlock." A woman seated with her face leaning on her hands in the very extremity of abandonment and despondency; a man seated a little backward, with his head lying on his arm, in an attitude of exhausted rage.

No. 3 was "Jealousy." A lady standing beside a young man, with her hand clasped in his, and the enraged husband of the former picture, gazing at them from behind the concealment of some shrubbery, with an expression of dislike and revenge.

No. 4 was "Desertion." It was a woman bending in an imploring attitude, to a defiant looking man, in travelling costume, as just about to abandon her.

No. 5 was called, "The Widow Won." And consisted of a lady, attired as a widow, standing beside an eager, joyous looking young man, who, after unbinding the widow's fillet from her brow, was clasping thereon a bridal wreath.

No. 6 was "The Unwelcome Return." It was a man and woman, with a child seated between them, apparently suddenly surprised by the apparition of a man who appears at the back part of the picture, and throws them all into an attitude of fright and dismay.

No. 7 was "Adjudication." It consisted of a woman between two men, before an ermined dispenser of the law. She is adjudged to the older and sterner of the two, who seems about to lead her away.

So ended the *tableaux*; though the costume and composition were perfect, yet the subjects were disagreeable, and left a gloom over the company rather than otherwise. It was remarked of Mrs. Wilmoth, who had stood leaning against the recess of a window, with her whole attention wrapped up in the spectacle, and talking to none, that her face suddenly flushed, then became pale, and she hurriedly made her way towards the door. But tottering, she seized hold of a chair, and had it not been for Underwood, who observed and hastened to her assistance, she would probably have fallen on the floor.

"Shall I call Miss Wilmoth?" said he, in conducting her, by her own desire, into one of the back rooms.

"Oh! by no means," said she; "it is merely a slight giddiness which I am accustomed to on changing my position suddenly. I am now quite well, and since no one seems to have observed it, I shall beg of you to say nothing of it to Annie. Let her finish entertaining her friends, and I shall not be missed."

As she really appeared quite recovered, Underwood returned to the company in the large room, whom he found in ecstasies of enjoyment. The supper passed over—the mottoes went their rounds,—Philopotas were bargained for—and now it was time to go.

"Do you know, I think I shall take advantage of Mr. Underwood's escort, and walk home to-night," said Susan Anstey to Miss Wilmoth.

"Nonsense! you shall not—till to-morrow."

Susan looked beseechingly.

"Well, if you really must go, I will give you a dispensation, though quite against my feelings—you will come soon again—"

"Certainly!"

With "Good night" they parted.

"Where is Mrs. Wilmoth?" said Annie to a servant, as soon as they had all gone.

"Gone to her own room, Miss. She has been calling for you for some time."

Annie flew up stairs; she found her mother undressed in her arm chair, and looking very ill.

"What is the matter, dear mamma?" said she in a tone of anxiety; "has anything happened to distress you?"

"Oh! no; I am not ill; but what have you done with that Miss Anstey?"

"She has gone home."

"Thank heaven!" said Mrs. Wilmoth; "it was forewarned to me ere I saw her that she was to bring misfortune to this house, and evil for you and me."

"Impossible, mother—the sweetest girl you can fancy—believe me, these are idle dreams."

"You knew nothing, then, of these pictures; you were no party in the plot."

"I do not understand you, mother," returned Annie, in some surprise.

"I see, it is nothing—but that girl. She is a foreigner, is she not?"

"English, I believe—"

"No matter; you look fatigued. Go to bed, now, love."

"Can I do nothing for you?"

"No! if I want you through the night, I shall call you. God bless you!" and they parted for the night.

(To be continued.)