

happy day, when my fancy first revelled through the fairy isle, and hovered over the scenes in his enchanting Tempest. My aunt was from home, and had left the key in the library door; it was forbidden ground—I ventured in, and snatched at the first book that came to hand. It was the first volume of Shakspeare. Afraid of detection, I stole away into the grove, and seated beneath the shadow of a noble oak, which overhung the stream; I devoured with rapture, the inspired page of the great magician. What a world of wonders it opened to my view! I breathed a new atmosphere, and, transported beyond the common cares and occupations of life, held communion with the glorious spirits of past ages. Since that eventful hour, the language of nature has become to me the language in which creation lifts up its myriad voices to the throne of God."

An enthusiastic country girl of sixteen, would alone have addressed this rhapsody to a stranger. A woman with half her talent and moral worth, would have blushed at her imprudence, in betraying the romance of her nature. Juliet was a novice in the ways of the world, and she spoke with the earnestness and simplicity of truth; and though Godfrey smiled in his heart, at her want of tact, there was one near, in whose breast Juliet Whitmore would have found an echo to her own thoughts.

The gentlemen rose to depart, but not before they had promised to dine at the lodge on the following day.

"Two fine young men," said the Captain, turning to his daughter, as the door closed upon his guests; "which of them took thy fancy most, Julie?"

"They are so much alike, I scarcely should know them apart," said Juliet; "I admired his person the most, that most resembled our dear old friend, the Colonel.

"Old, Miss Juliet! "I hope you do not mean to call Colonel Hurdlestone an old man?" said Miss Dorothy, drawing up: "you will be calling me old next!"

"And not far from the truth, if she did," muttered the Captain. "That was the Colonel's nephew, Mr. Anthony Hurdlestone, Julie."

"I am sorry for it—the son of that horrible old man! I saw him once, and took him for a beggar. Is it possible that that elegant young gentleman can be his son?"

"I think the case somewhat doubtful," said Miss Dorothy; "I wonder at Colonel Hurdlestone having the effrontery to introduce that young man as his nephew; nature herself contradicts the assertion."

"Come, Dolly, don't you be censorious; I thought that the Colonel was a great friend of yours!"

"He was—but I am not blind, said Miss Dorothy, with dignity; "I have altered my mind with regard to Colonel Hurdlestone, and would not become his wife, if he were to ask me on his knees."

"I wish he would pop the question," said the Captain; "I'd bet my life on't, that he would not have to ask twice."

"Sir," replied the lady, casting upon her brother a withering glance; "I never mean to marry a widower—an uncle who brings with him nephews so like himself." And so saying, Miss Dorothy swept from the room, leaving her brother convulsed with laughter.

"Miss Whitmore is not so handsome as I expected to find her after the fuss George Braconberry made about her the other night at Wymas," said Godfrey, pulling up his horse, as they rode home, and addressing Anthony. Her figure is delightful—symmetry itself; but her face—she has nothing gay or joyous about her. There is a sad expression in those eyes of hers beautiful though they be, which makes one feel grave in a moment. I wanted to pay her a few compliments, by way of ingratiating myself into her good graces; but hang, me! if I could look her in the face, and do it. A man must possess more confidence than I do, to look into those sweet serious eyes, and attempt to deceive her. I never felt afraid of a woman before."

"I am glad to hear you say so," returned Anthony. "To me she is beautiful—exceedingly beautiful. I would not exchange that noble expression of hers, for the most faultless features and blooming complexion in the world. The dignity of her countenance is but the mirror in which I see reflected the beauty of the soul, as the stars reveal on the bosom of the stream, the Heaven in which they dwell."

"Are you turned poet, too, Master Anthony? Mary Mathews, down at the farm, has a prettier face, or I am no judge of female beauty."

"We all know your *penchant* for Mary Mathews," said Anthony. "But seriously, Godfrey, if you do not mean to marry the poor girl, it is cruel of you to pay her the lover-like attentions you do."

"One must do something Tony, to pass away the time in this dull place. As to marrying the girl, you do not surely take me for a fool?"

"I should be sorry to take you for something worse," said Anthony, gravely; "last night, you went too far, when you took the sweet briar-rose from her bosom, and placed it in your own, and said that you preferred it to all the flowers in the garden; that your highest ambition was to win and wear the wild rose. And the poor girl believed you. Did you not see how she looked down and blushed, and then up in your face, with the tears in her eyes, and a sweet smile upon her severed lips. Surely, my dear cousin, it is wrong to give birth to hopes which you never mean to realize."

A crimson flush passed over the brow of Godfrey.