

impassioned expression of her countenance in the chilling garb of coldness and hauteur, was Mademoiselle Flora Favieri; while the other, possessing a less dignified, though no less striking style of beauty, was of a small, fairy-like figure, with a fair complexion and graceful contour; though in her also, much of this native grace was disfigured by a disdainful and imperious expression, that was evidently the effect of the unbounded indulgence in which she had been nurtured, and the obsequious servility with which from her cradle her slightest wishes had been complied with. This last was Mademoiselle Delphine Durand, the daughter of M. Durand, and the richest heiress in France. Different, then, as were the characters and appearances of these two belles, there did not appear any want of congeniality as to their topics of conversation. Each complimented the other upon the elegance of her toilette; from thence they proceeded to discuss the various merits and demerits of the fashionable milliners and dress-makers in Paris, and both agreed that Mademoiselle Alexandrine of the Rue de Richelieu, was the queen of that useful class. To this subject succeeded one that is an invariable ingredient in the conversation of young ladies at a ball: that is, they amused themselves by ridiculing all the ladies of the party, and making satirical remarks upon all the men who passed before them as they sat.

After having turned a deaf ear to the many urgent solicitations that were constantly made for their hands in the dance, and having for a long time resolutely maintained this exclusive conversation, spite of the most repeated and determined assaults upon their privacy, they were at length interrupted by M. de Favieri himself; who, approaching with Arthur de Lozerac, presented him to his daughter, with these words, pronounced in that significant Italian style that leaves one in doubt whether the speaker is in jest or earnest—

"I have come myself, Flora, to make you acquainted with Monsieur de Lozerac, of whom I have spoken to you before."

Mademoiselle Favieri replied to Monsieur de Lozerac's salutation merely by a slight bend and an almost imperceptible smile, while on his part, Arthur saluted Mademoiselle Durand as a previous acquaintance, yet with reserve. As soon as he had retired, Delphine said to Flora—

"You receive M. Arthur de Lozerac then?"

"Oh! yes," said Flora, in a supercilious tone.

"Then I suppose you have been some time acquainted?"

"No. I never saw him 'till this evening."

"And how do you like him?"

"Oh! I don't know. I didn't look at him."

"I have heard him spoken of," replied Delphine, "as a very accomplished and gentlemanly young man, and he surely bears a distinguished name."

"And very handsome, is he not?" enquired Flora.

"Yes;" replied Delphine.

"Well, they have taught you the same story as myself, I see," said Flora; "this young man has friends, who announce him in this manner in all houses where there is a rich heiress unmarried."

"Do you think so?" cried Delphine, eagerly.

"So my father tells me."

"And is it with such an object that your father receives him here?"

"I should think not," replied Flora, scornfully. "A man whose fortune is deranged, and whose origin is somewhat suspicious, would suit neither the banker Favieri, nor the Marquis de Favieri."

"But, spite of that, he may possibly suit you," said Delphine.

"No!" cried Flora, in a tone that served effectually to lull any jealous fears that might have arisen in the fair questioner's breast; "a young milksop, who trembles before his father like a school-boy before the rod, and who always casts down his eyes before a woman as though she were going to devour him for love!"

"He can look at them, I assure you," rejoined Delphine, archly, "when he finds them to his mind."

"So I perceive," said Flora, "for he is gazing at you with mute ecstasy."

"Pooh! you are mistaken," replied Delphine, blushing deeply; "it is you he is looking at."

"We will soon prove that, for I shall leave you for a moment," and taking the arm of a gentleman who came up at the instant, she removed to another part of the room.

No sooner was Delphine alone, than Arthur hurried up and asked her to dance.

The young lady, whose eyes shone with a mischievous brilliancy at his approach, replied drily and in a low voice—

"You are a little too late."

"Are you then engaged for the whole evening?" said Arthur.

"I meant to say that Mademoiselle de Favieri is just gone."