

"Simply this," said Edward, recounting the scene which had transpired at Mrs Dunmore's, and attributing, justly as he thought, Lucia's ill-humour, to the involuntary interest he had betrayed in a very lovely girl, whom Mrs. Dunmore had employed in the manufacture of some artificial flowers.

"The beautiful flower-girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Calthorpe, her cheek and eye kindling with animated delight.

"What then? and why this sudden emotion, Alice, at the mention of so humble an individual?" asked Beaufort in surprise.

"Why, Edward, she is all the rage now, talked of in all circles; at Mrs. Linzie's ball last night she was the sole topic,—so Doctor Moreland told me this morning. But it is only recently, that, having attracted the attention of some fashionable ladies, she has become known at all, though it is said, that for years, young as she is, she has maintained a sick and feeble mother with her earnings."

"Her worth then attracted no sympathy or regard," said Beaufort, with a smile of irony. "It was her beauty only that interested these votaries of fashion in her behalf! Oh, heartlessness of the gay world! be it my lot to live forever apart from its vain frivolities, its cold and hollow charities!"

"But, Edward, are you at all aware, who this young creature is? Listen and be astonished when I tell you that she is our near relative, being, in very truth, the granddaughter of our miserly uncle, old Mr. Dorival.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Beaufort, and a sensation like that of an electric touch vibrated through his whole frame, setting again in motion the warm pulses of the heart which had been chilled by Lucia's coldness. "Impossible!" he repeated, "who can have told you this strange story, Alice?"

"No less a personage than Doctor Moreland, Edward, and his authenticity is seldom doubted. He knows her well, and describes her as little less angelic in soul, than they say she is in person."

"Can this be so?" said Beaufort thoughtfully.

"Without a doubt, Edward; the flower-girl whom you saw at Mrs. Dunmore's this morning, is the daughter of Harry Dorival, whose widow, after his death, sought a home for herself and child with the old miser, and there they have lived in poverty and obscurity ever since. The mother has recently been very ill, and Doctor Moreland attended her, and such a tale he told me of their trials and privations, as made my very heart ache. The daughter, he said, toiled incessantly with uncomplaining sweetness, for her mother's comfort and support, bearing self-denial and hardship, with a patient cheerfulness that he had never seen equalled. She seldom spoke of their situation, nor ever repined at the cruel avarice, which in the midst of abundance, left them to struggle with the cold and pitiless gripe of poverty; but her mother, a querulous and weak woman, had

told him the whole story of their sufferings, since they dwelt beneath the miser's roof; and she said, the only joy and comfort that had brightened her gloomy home, arose from the ceaseless care and love of her poor girl, who from childhood's early dawn, regardless of herself, had studied only how she might best minister to her mother's peace and happiness."

Beaufort was deeply touched by this lovely picture of virtue and filial piety, nor could he avoid contrasting it with the *tableau* of his indulged and self-willed mistress, the spoiled child of luxury, the slave of every idle and capricious whim.

"We must seek out our new relatives, Alice," he said after a brief pause, "and I regret now, that we had not done so on our first arrival in the city."

"Would that we had, Edward; for our mother's sake, I once walked past the miser's dwelling, with the design of entering, but the very aspect of the dismal den chilled me with gloom, and thinking that whoever might abide there with him, must partake of his nature, and have adopted his habits, I returned home, and have not since thought of him, till he was recalled to my recollection this morning by the touching history which Doctor Moreland related of the young Madelaine, his granddaughter."

"And did he know, Alice, that she was a relative of ours?"

"Not till I informed him of the circumstance, and he then said, natural as it was, that we should wish to shun all intercourse with our penurious uncle, he hoped we should not exclude the females of his household from our sympathy and friendship—that they deserved both from us, and would reflect no discredit on any who might be at the pains to cultivate their acquaintance; and that besides, it would be an act of humanity to rescue them from the miserable obscurity, where they had so long dwelt unheeded and unsought."

"It would so, indeed, dear Alice; and ours shall be the pleasant task of providing for them a happier home, which, were it a palace, that lovely girl would adorn with her beauty and her virtues."

"She is then beautiful?"

"Transcendantly so—even without the adventitious aid of dress and ornament, I thought I had never beheld any thing more lovely. Nor was it the beauty of form, feature, or complexion, that rivetted my gaze—but the perfect harmony and grace of every movement, 'the mind, the music, breathing from her face,' and the stainless purity and innocence that seemed like an atmosphere to surround her. But I little thought as I admiringly regarded her, and heard her gentle replies to her frivolous interrogator, that a current of my own blood coursed through the blue veins, that swelled into distinctness with every varying emotion that arose within her."

"You are as enthusiastic in her praise, as was Doctor Moreland, Edward. But he said one thing