

self for long periods entirely to his dinner, which he did with great energy and appetite.

The gentleman on Jeanne's other side was afforded an excellent view of a thick knob of brown hair, and a very white and dimpled neck and shoulder; but he scarcely saw even the profile of his pretty neighbour, and no opportunity of addressing her was granted to him.

"Was it all right? Did I do well?" she asked the Duke anxiously after dinner.

"Perfectly," he said, encouragingly. "I hope you talked a little to Mr. Jermyn, who sat next you? He is such an interesting man, and a great friend of my own."

"I carefully never spoke to him," said poor Jeanne, in horror, "I thought I must not speak to anybody until I was introduced."

"Your neighbour at dinner is an exception," said the Duke, laughing at her dismay. "Never mind, you can make up for it to-morrow."

"Miss de Courset, come and play billiard-fives," cried Lord Dermot, interrupting, "unless you are a bridger. Are you a bridger?"

As soon as she had learnt what was meant by the term, Jeanne assured him earnestly that she was not; and with a bright look of apology at Denis—for how was it possible to refuse the friend of Louis?—she went off with Lord Dermot and two or three of the younger members of the party, to be initiated into the mysteries of billiard-fives.

The Duke walked to the piano in the now brilliantly lighted hall and began to improvise; and a young lady who meant to marry him if she could, sat within his view, in a becoming attitude, and listened with rapt attention. At the close of each movement she hoped he would leave off playing and come and talk to her, but it invariably glided into another, until at last she gave up in despair and went away, not daring to interrupt him, for it was known that to be interrupted when he was making music was the one thing which ruffled the Duke's even temper.