

# THE LENNOXVILLE MAGAZINE.

## THE BRERETONS.

### CHAPTER IV.

AS Maud quitted her post of observation on the knoll, and descended amongst untrodden growths of bracken, she was hidden from view herself, and also lost sight of the person she was going to meet, for the ferns towered above her head. But this was the case for a short distance only, and within a few seconds she emerged on the beaten track, and found herself face to face not with her brother, but with Mr. Carlton. He was standing at one end of the pathway, and was waiting evidently for her.

Disappointment and vexation were legible in Maud's countenance. For a moment she remained motionless, neither attempting to go forwards nor caring to return. Then bowing coldly she turned homewards.

Mr. Carlton advanced and holding out his hand, said gravely, "pray do not go away without speaking to me. I know I am not the person you either intended or expected to see, and I feel truly sorry for your disappointment. But, indeed, I am not to blame, as you will soon know. The fact is, (and here he looked round, fearful lest he should be overheard,) I am the bearer of a letter to you from your brother. There it is." He paused, for Maud had become deadly pale. "You had better not stand in the damp, Miss Brereton. If you will allow me I will walk with you in the direction of your house."

"Go on with your story, pray," said Maud, "you have seen Frank. Where is he? Why did he not come himself this evening?"

"Do not be alarmed. He is still in the neighbourhood, and I do not think he will leave it without seeing you. He did not come to-night because he thinks he is watched, and as he does not wish to bring you into trouble with your father, he has resolved to remain in concealment for a few days. But, I believe, his letter explains everything," replied Mr. Carlton.

"Here is papa," interrupted Maud, "he has returned earlier than he intended, and he must be coming to look for me."

"I do not think he has seen us yet, and as I am sure he will not like