

"One day, when I had been in the family about six months, Sir James asked me to give him my history. I did so, and he seemed much struck with it. The result was, that he sat down by my side, one day, and asked me plainly if I would marry him.

"Marry you!" cried I, in surprise.

"Sir James Melton was a man of sixty. In answer to my exclamation of astonishment, he said, 'Yes; I ask if you will be my wife? I am rich, but have no comfort or happiness. My relatives seem to yearn to see me in the grave. I have ailments which require a deep degree of kindly care, that is not to be bought from servants. I have heard your story, and believe you to be one who will support prosperity as well as you have done adversity. I make my proposal sincerely, and I hope you may agree to it.'

"At that time, Frederick," continued the lady, "I loved you. I had seen you but once, but that occasion was too memorable for me ever to forget it, and something always insinuated to me that we were to pass through life together. Yet every one around me pressed me to accept the offer made to me, and the thought struck me that I might one day make you wealthy. At length my only objection to Sir James Melton's proposal lay in a disinclination to make myself the instrument of vengeance in Sir James' hands, against relatives whom he might dislike without good grounds. The objection, when stated, only increased his anxiety for my consent; and finding it would be carrying romance the length of folly to reject the advantageous settlement offered to me, I consented to Sir James' proposal.

"This part of my story, Frederick, is like a fairy tale. I, the poor orphan, penniless and friendless, became the wife of one of the richest baronets of England. Dressed in silks, and sparkling with jewels, I could now pass in my carriage through the streets where a few months before I had stood in the darkness a mendicant."

"Happy Sir James!" cried M. de la Tour, at this part of the story; "he could prove his love by enriching you."

"He was happy," resumed the lady. "Our marriage, so strangely assorted, proved much more conducive, it is probable, to his comfort, than if he had wedded one with whom all the parade of settlements and pin money would have been necessary. Never, I believe, did he for an instant repent of our union. I, on my part, conceived myself bound to do my best for the sake of his declining years; and he, on his part, thought it incumbent on him to provide for my future welfare. He died, leaving me a large part of his substance—as much, indeed, as I could prevail upon myself to accept.

"I was a widow, and, from the hour in which I became so, I would never again consent to give my hand to any man, except to him who had succeeded me in my hour of distress, and whose remembrance had ever been preserved in the recesses of my heart. But how to discover that man! Ah, unconscious ingrate! to make no endeavor to come in the way of one who sought to love, to cherish you. In vain I looked for you at balls, assemblies and theatres. You went not there." As the lady spoke, she took from her neck a riband, to which was attached a piece of a hundred sous. "It is the same, the very same which you gave me," said she, presenting it to Frederick; "by pledging it, I got credit from a neighbor for a little bread, and I earned enough afterwards in time to permit me to redeem it. I vowed never to part with it.

"Ah, how happy I was, Frederick, when I saw you in the street! The excuse which I made for stopping you was the first which arose to my mind. But what terrors I felt afterward, lest you should have been already married. In that case you would never have heard aught of this fairy tale, though I would have taken some means or other to serve and enrich you. I would have gone to England, and there passed my days, in regret perhaps, but still in peace. But happily it was otherwise. You were free."

Frederick de la Tour was now awakened, as it were, to the full certainty of his happiness. What he could not but before look upon as a sort of freak of fancy in a young and wealthy woman, was now proved to be the result of deep, kindly feeling, most honorable to her who entertained it. The heart of the young husband overflowed with gratitude and affection to the lovely and noble-hearted being who had given herself to him. He was too happy to speak. His wife first broke silence.

"So, Frederick," said she, gaily, "you see that if I am a fairy, it is you that have given me the wand, the talisman, that has effected all."

NECESSITY OF PROPERLY EXERCISING THE MIND.

As the body from disuse may come in time to be deprived of all its powers, so the mental faculties may lose all their energy, through a neglect of their being exerted duly, and the man be no longer able to act, or not act in the manner that best becomes him. Therefore fathers, although otherwise well assured of the good dispositions of their children, forget not to warn them against the company of ill men; knowing, that as to converse with the good must exercise every virtue; so to associate with the bad must prove no less pernicious and baneful.—*Nonphom.*