

offended. "My girls are in no haste to be married; they are too happy at home—and too particular; Arabella has refused no less than three offers."

"Three! ahem!" said the provoking spinster, clearing her throat in a significant manner, and walking over to Lady Marley, who was arranging the card tables.

"That is the rudest woman I ever met," observed Mrs. Cobb, turning to a lady, "and with all her pretended contempt for men, I am convinced she would give her ears for a husband."

The gentlemen did not make their appearance until a late hour. Lady Marley reproached Captain Warburton for his want of gallantry, when he said:

"I am not to blame, I assure you; I have been wishing to come to you for the last hour, but Sir James got upon the subject of the repeal, and there was no moving him."

"Provoking man! I wish to goodness there could be a repeal of the union," returned the lady; "for I am heartily tired of it."

"Not tired of the wealth the union has brought you, I imagine; Lady Marley," said Miss Sykes, very pointedly, who had overheard the remark.

"To be sure Sir James is a very queer looking little man," she added, seeing him approaching. "How could you persuade him to conceal his grey hairs under that abominable wig?"

"Sir James dresses as he pleases, Miss Sykes, and so do I," replied Lady Marley, stiffly.

"So I perceive, my dear," retorted the maiden; "for, if you dressed to please others, you would cover your shoulders a little more."

"Miss Sykes is a privileged person," said Lady Marley, endeavouring to hide her chagrin, under a laugh. "She would correct the whole world if she could."

"I certainly would put many things right that I now see wrong," replied her tormentor. "Wives should be content with their own husbands, and not try to gain the hearts of their neighbours; they should be modest, chaste, and keepers at home."

"Old maids' wives and children, are proverbially perfection," said Lady Marley, bitterly.

"Bravo, Charlotte, bravo!" exclaimed Mr. Wilkins, clapping his hands. "Attack her with her own weapons; what say you to that, Miss Sykes?"

"That I quite agree with Lady Marley," she replied; "with less to occupy us, we are quicker to discern the faults and follies of our acquaintances; but we are quite as ready as others to admire real worth when we behold it—real innocence, and not its miserable counterfeit—real goodness, and not its semblance." And she linked

her arm within Katherine's, who had drawn near her husband, as she said this.

Lady Marley felt angry and mortified, particularly as she noticed Captain Warburton's gaze of admiration on his wife, whose fair open brow did indeed express all that was pure, and good, and lovely.

"Are we not going to have some music, Charlotte?" said Sir James, now hobbling up to the party.

"I hope so; Mrs. Warburton, perhaps you will favour us," she said, feeling sure that Katherine could be no performer.

In this, however, she was mistaken, for Captain Warburton, pleased to see his wife an object of attraction, and overruling her extreme reluctance, led her to the piano, and obliged her to sit down. An age had passed since she had trusted her voice in singing, and painful it was to make the effort now; but to please her husband, what would she not have tried to do?

After musing a while, she chose the air he had first asked her to sing in her own happy home. Her voice as she began was tremulous from various saddening recollections, but as she proceeded, she gained courage, and sang it with such exquisite taste and feeling, that every one was enchanted; every one but Lady Marley, who could scarcely disguise her chagrin on beholding Captain Warburton hanging over his wife's chair, delighted with the sensation she had caused, and evidently touched himself by her sweet strains.

"Charming, indeed!" said Sir James Marley, who was particularly fond of music. "I have not enjoyed such a treat for a long time. Nay, pray do not leave the instrument," as Katherine, confused by the praises she received, rose to move away. "One more song, I beg."

"Do you know the heart that loves fondest of any?" asked Mr. Wilkins; "it is a beautiful air."

"I never heard it," replied Katherine, smiling; "I sing very few English songs."

"Do not fatigue Mrs. Warburton," said Lady Marley, now approaching. "The young people are impatient to dance, and the band are in the ball-room. Captain Warburton, shall we lead the way?"

He started at the sound of her voice, half irresolute, when several gentlemen thronging round Katherine, begged so earnestly for another song, that she felt obliged to comply. Again she astonished and charmed her audience with a splendid Italian air; but this time she experienced no gratification from their applause, for Lady Marley had, in the midst of it, managed to draw away her husband, and his praise was all she coveted to receive. Sir James Marley, overflowing her