

TEMPEST AND SUNSHINE;

OR, LIFE IN KENTUCKY.

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Continued from our last.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Let us now transport our readers to the elegant residence of Judge Fulton, which was situated upon Fifth Avenue. Stanton, with his fair bride, had returned from visiting his parents near Geneva, and now in the large parlors of Judge Fulton, they were receiving the congratulations of their friends, whose number each moment increased, until the rooms were filled to overflowing. Frank and his party had not yet arrived. He designed to be late, for he well knew his mother and sister would not be early, and he wished to give them the full benefit of Fanny's introduction into the drawing-room.

But a part of his scheme was frustrated, for his mother, who was suffering with a violent headache, was obliged to remain above stairs for a time, and Gertrude alone witnessed her brother's triumph. She was standing near Mr. and Mrs. Stanton, carelessly twirling a costly bouquet, which one of her obsequious beaux had given her, when she overheard Nellie saying to her husband, "I do hope she will come, for I am all impatience to see one whom you have praised till I am half jealous."

Gertrude wondered much whom Mrs. Stanton could mean, but her wonder soon ceased, for there was a stir at the door. The crowd around it fell back as Frank Cameron walked proudly into the room, bearing upon his arm Fanny Middleton. Her fame had preceded her, for many of those present had learned that a Kentucky belle and heiress was stopping at the Astor, and would be present at the party. As she advanced into the room, Gertrude felt, rather than heard the murmur of admiration which ran round the room, and her quick ear caught the words, "Yes, that's she; that's the heiress; that's Miss Middleton from Frankfort."

Gladly would Gertrude have escaped her brother's eye, which instantly sought her out; but she felt unable to move, and stood watching the animated face and graceful manners of Fanny, who, in being presented to Mrs. Fulton and Stanton passed near her. Every article of Fanny's dress was noted, and an estimate made as to its probable cost. "She must be wealthy," thought she, "or she could not dress so expensively." Suddenly one of Gertrude's acquaintances touched her elbow and said, "Come, Miss Cameron, do gratify our curiosity and tell us about this Kentucky belle. Of course you know her, as she is attended by your brother."

Deeply mortified, Gertrude was obliged to confess that she had no acquaintance with her. "That's strange," said the lady. "We all supposed she stopped at your father's with your cousin."

A new idea entered Gertrude's mind, and instead of replying to this last remark, she said, "I shall know her well, though, for Frank has proposed to her."

"Did she accept him?" asked the lady, eagerly. "Of course," was Gertrude's haughty answer. "Do you think he would offer himself unless sure of success?"

Ten minutes more, and dozens of persons were gossiping about the engagement between Frank Cameron and the beautiful Kentuckian. Scores of questions were poured in upon Gertrude relative to her future sister-in-law, but none of them could she answer. Vexed at her own ignorance, she ran up stairs to her mother, whom she told to "come down immediately and see what tools they had made of them-selves."

"Why, what is the matter, child?" said Mrs. Cameron, alarmed at Gertrude's excited looks and manners.

"All the city are ready to fall down and worship this Fanny Middleton, whom we have treated with such neglect," said Gertrude, and then she added what was of more consequence than all the rest, "Why, mother, she is the most elegantly dressed lady in the room!"

In a moment Mrs. Cameron was descending the broad staircase. There was the sound of the piano and some one singing. Gertrude pressed forward until she caught sight of the singer, then pulling her mother's sleeve, she whispered, "This way, mother; that is Miss Middleton playing."

Mrs. Cameron's first emotion on beholding Fanny and the flattering attentions she every where received, was one of intense mortification, to think she had not been first to notice and chaperone her. "I will, however, make all possible amends now," thought she, and finding Frank, she desired for herself and Gertrude an introduction to Miss Middleton; but Frank did not feel disposed to grant his mother's request immediately, and he said, "Pardon me, mother, but you see Miss Middleton is very much engaged at present with some of her friends, so you must wait awhile."

Mrs. Cameron was too proud to ask any one else to introduce her, and it seemed that she and Gertrude were not likely to make Fanny's acquaintance at all. Towards the close of the party, however, Frank thought proper to introduce them. Mrs. Cameron determined to do her best, and she overwhelmed Fanny with so much flattery, that the poor girl longed for some way of escape, thinking to herself, "Is it possible that Frank Cameron's mother is such a silly woman?" Once Mrs. Cameron went so far as to hint the probability that Miss Middleton would one day be her daughter!

"What can she possibly mean?" thought Fanny; at the same time gracefully excusing herself, she ran up stairs after her hat and shawl, as Kate had signified her intention of returning home. But Mrs. Cameron was not to be thus foiled. She started in pursuit, and reaching the bonnet-room as soon as Fanny, insisted that she and Kate should stop with her during the remainder of her stay in the city. As Frank soon appeared and joined his entreaties with those of his mother, Fanny said she would do just as Mrs. Miller thought proper. Kate, who had expected a similar denouement, expressed her perfect willingness to visit at her uncle's.

Accordingly the next morning they left their rooms at the Astor House and repaired to Mrs.