

"No, my darling, you do not. But supposing that I should give in to you in the matter of a companion, I must have you see some society. Just now I have in my pocket an invitation to dinner at the Dalton's, we will accept it."

"Oh, papa, I cannot go yet, it is only three months since——"

"Stuff! sentimental nonsense. I tell you, you must go. - So hold yourself in readiness."

"I have no dress," said Maud, as a last resource. What woman does not know that the men of her family like to see her well dressed although they so often laugh at her little fineries, and profess to condemn the delicate finish of her attire.

"Leave that to me, I will arrange that," was the reply.

And Maud was forced to yield, and she thought, if my mother still takes any interest in what I do, she knows that it is from no disrespect to her that I obey my father's orders. It is what she would wish me to do.

In the course of a few days a large box arrived from London, containing a costly set of mourning visiting dresses. And Maud, arrayed in one of these, presented herself before her father on the evening of the dinner party at the Daltons. He smiled his approval and they set out.

Miss Brereton's arrival created quite a sensation in the drawing-room at Monckton Manor, and friends and acquaintances congratulated themselves and one another on her reappearance amongst them, for she was a favourite, and her late bereavement made young and old feel specially kindly towards her. But, from all this, Maud drew her own inferences—that people were surprised to see her again so soon in society—and each fresh greeting went to her heart.

After dinner was over, and the gentlemen had rejoined the ladies in the drawing-room, Mr. Carlton, to whom she had not spoken before, came to Maud and said, "It is an unexpected pleasure to meet you to-night, Miss Brereton."

"It is not my fault, Mr. Carlton," replied Maud sadly, with an *et tu*, Brute, expression in her soft eyes. "It is not my fault. Papa insisted on my coming, and he says——"

"Yes, Mr. Carlton, papa did insist on her coming, and he means to rouse her from her moping habits; and he means to use measures to prevent her from confining her attentions to one or two people only. In admitting these favoured few to share their sorrows, no woman is supposed to transgress the laws of society—oh, you clergy were always cunning people from the time of the monks downward—generous comforters you are," interrupted Mr. Brereton, who had advanced unseen and had taken up a position behind his daughter's chair. He was