

our affair in Cambridge! is there any hope of success?"

"All you could wish, my lord! the capricious beauty has at length consented to be mine. The letter did the work! In fact it nearly robbed me of my pretty lady-love, for Mrs. Burton assured me that she lay for many hours, after reading it, in a death-like swoon, from which she feared she would never recover. My lord, could you now behold that once brilliant beauty, your heart would chide you, for blasting such angelic loveliness! She is now but the wreck of her former self, and when in obedience to what she thought the wishes of lord Frederick, she consented to be mine, her look of utter wretchedness, the voice of utter, despairing misery, pierced my very soul with horror!"

"And when will the ceremony take place, which will put an end to all this plotting? I wish it may be without any delay!"

"Certainly, my lord! Florence is indifferent on that point; and for myself, believe me I am anxious to be once again the undisputed lord of my own possessions! but methinks your lordship is in great haste to dispose of an estate so fair as that which pertains to Wilmot house.

"I have my reasons! Harriet more than half suspects our intrigue, she has even intimated that by forged letters I had destroyed her brother's happiness! Now, how she became possessed of the idea, I do not know, but with this clew, that wily head of hers will not be long in unveiling the whole affair."

"Then name an early day! and when she is mine, exposure will be unavailing."

"This day week then let it be! I shall myself be present, and immediately make over to you the estate in question; and none will ever know that it once was mine!"

After arranging various matters, the earl and baronet arose, and left the library, and as the door closed after them, Lady Harriet stole noiselessly from the recess of a window, where, shaded by the rich damask curtains, she had remained unseen, and left the room by an opposite door, and hastily sought the solitude of her chamber.

Her resolute spirit, which had never known restraint, could not bow down in meek submission, at the first display of parental authority, more especially so, as now her dearest hopes, her fondest wishes, depended on resistance; so when the earl commanded her to retire to her own room, as an act of petty disobedience, she resolved not to do so, but retired to the library, and seated herself where she might indulge her ill humor free from molestation; she thus became pos-

sessed of that, which but one short hour before, she would have sacrificed much to know.

"Now, my wise schemers," she cried, as she threw herself into a chair, "I will indeed unveil your intrigue! But how! only one short week! I cannot write to Florence, for my letter would not be permitted to reach her! I cannot write to Frederick, for 'twill be two days before we can send letters again in that direction! neither could I bribe a servant to go to him, for his presence would be missed, and thus all would be betrayed! Stay, the mail does not leave Canterbury until six this evening! Yes, I can manage it."

Seizing a pen, she wrote as hastily as possible an account of all she had heard; urging her brother to hasten to Cambridge, and save Florence from the power of her enemies. She also wrote a few lines to Lawton, begging him to assist lord Frederick with his counsel and presence, and ended with a protestation of undying attachment.

Lady Harriet walked carelessly into the room where the countess was sitting, and seated herself near the window. "Where is papa?" she asked indifferently, after some time had elapsed.

"He is walking with Sir James Wilmot, who is but recently arrived," replied the countess, in a quiet voice.

"Well, I must pay a visit to my pet, Sylvia, before I dress for dinner," said her ladyship, as she walked leisurely from the room.

As lady Harriet was in the habit of paying visits to her favorite, her proposed walk to the stables at this time excited no surprise, and gave rise to no remark from the fond mother, who suspected not that she had any other motive than that assigned.

"Harry," said the young lady to the stable boy, as she patted the neck of her palfrey, "how gets along the earl's black hunter—is he more gentle than formerly?"

"Oh! he is a sad wild fellow, my lady, but I bring him out every day, and trust I shall soon tame him.

"And will you ride to-day?" asked lady Harriet.

"Certainly! but why does your ladyship inquire."

"If you could ride to Canterbury, and leave those letters for me, I will be greatly obliged, but neither the earl, nor any of your fellow servants must ever know. But you must go soon, or 'twill be useless!"

Harry took the letters, as he bowed assent, and lady Harriet, slipping a guinea into his hand, bestowed one more caress on her favorite Sylvia, and returned to the house.