

summons, exclaimed, as she beheld the wildness of her appearance :

"La, Miss Beatrice, what ever is the matter ? dear, dear, see how you have torn your beautiful dress," lifting it from the floor ; " what a thousand pities !"

"Don't stand lamenting over the trash like a fool," returned Beatrice, very petulantly ; "but help me to get to bed, for I am dying with fatigue—off, off with this horrid wreath, there, thank goodness, I am released ?"

Norris knew her young lady too well to offer any expostulation ; she assisted her as quickly as possible, without venturing to enquire the cause of her perturbation. At length Beatrice laid her aching head on her pillow, forgetful of her prayers and of her duty to God, while the ball, the music, the gay forms, and the image of Colonel Brereton falling under his adversary's hand, tortured her imagination for hours, till she fell asleep. Norris watched by her side a considerable time, when perceiving with thankfulness that she really slept, she placed the lamp at some distance from her and then retired.

Not long, however, after her departure was poor Beatrice suffered to enjoy repose ; feverish dreams haunted her, and waking with a start, she sat up in her bed, while a confused recollection of her fears rushed on her mind ; she drew aside her curtains and perceived the grey morning breaking in the east, and unable to rest she left it and walked over to the window—all looked cheerless and gloomy without ; she strained her eyes in the direction of Colonel Brereton's apartment ; a light was still burning there ; she continued watching, pale, and shivering with cold, until she fancied that she heard footsteps and the tramp of a horse on the terrace beneath. She unclosed her lattice and looked eagerly forth, when her worst fears seemed to be realised on beholding Antonio leading his master's well known charger, equipped for going out.

"Merciful God, what will become of me," ejaculated the terrified girl, clasping her hands. "Another moment and this agony will destroy me ; let the consequences be what they may I will learn the worst."

With these words she threw on her dressing gown, and regardless of who she might meet, or what they would say, she left her apartment to seek Colonel Brereton. All the rooms through which she passed were still in darkness. On reaching the gallery over the entrance hall she fled down the staircase, where she encountered one or two of the domestics, who gazed upon her in astonishment, but she paused not until she gained the door of Colonel Brereton's private sitting room, where, entirely overcome by her feelings, she fell down with a faint scream. Some one hastily unclosed it from within ;

it was himself, who, on beholding her thus, said, as he raised her in his arms :

"Good God ! Beatrice, what is the matter—why are you here in this wild state ?"

She gasped, she tried to speak, but she could not, and in much alarm he carried her into his room, where, placing her on a couch, he held her hands, which were cold as death, between both his, as he repeated his anxious enquiry of "what had disturbed her ?"

"Oh ! I know you have quarrelled with that horrid man," at length sobbed Beatrice ; "and I am sure you are going to fight him, for your horse is at the door. Oh, Claude, dear Claude, if you love me, forgive me, and do not break my heart."

She threw her arms round his neck as she said this, while her tears fell in showers on his bosom ; he seemed affected by this display of her affection, and pressing her tenderly, he asked :

"My poor child, who has terrified you with such thoughts—I do not comprehend you ?"

"Oh, yes you do—I saw it all myself last night, after I had disobeyed you by dancing with Lord Stepmey, you looked dreadfully angry, and I cannot tell you how unhappy it made me."

"You acted like a very silly girl. I confess," returned Colonel Brereton, now smiling, and stroking her face as she looked imploringly in his ; "but for Heaven's sake compose yourself, or you will be ill. I had no quarrel with Lord Stepmey, who went away early last night ; neither am I going to meet him this morning."

"Are you really telling me the truth ?" inquired Beatrice, intently surveying his countenance. "What then did Major Boileau wish to say to you, and why is your horse awaiting you ?"

"Boileau wished to arrange the hour when the hounds were to meet, and you see me booted and spurred for the chase. Now are you satisfied, you little simpleton ?"

"Oh, thank God ! thank God !" fervently ejaculated Beatrice, with a deep-drawn sigh ; "a weight of misery has been removed from my heart. Claude, I will never offend you again, I am determined."

"Make no rash promises, dear," returned Colonel Brereton, tenderly pressing his lips to hers. "I fear many dark days, many storms are gathering over us ; but we must bow before them, since we cannot resist their violence, or the fate which has ordained that our destinies should be united."

"It is not yet too late to avert them, if you think so, or repeat your choice," said Beatrice, with emotion, while her eyes assumed an almost unnatural brightness. "Perhaps Miss Gaveston—"

"Hush ! self-tormentor," interrupted Colonel Brereton, holding up his finger, and smiling. "Have I not known Miss Gaveston for two years ? and had I wished it, might I not have taught her to love me