

not stay here, though," he said on recovering himself; "shall we go in and have a rubber at whist?" and the old man toddled off, leaving his young wife in the arms of Captain Warburton, to flirt and talk as she pleased.

The waltzing was kept up with great spirit for some time, till a dark cloud, and a few drops of rain falling, alarmed the young ladies, who, for the sake of their smart new bonnets, hurried into the house. A large room, in which Sir James Marley was making a collection of paintings, was then thrown open; here, with the assistance of the music, they found ample amusement.

Lady Marley deputed her brother to act as master of ceremonies, contrived soon after this to steal away, and, accompanied by Captain Warburton, to wander into the most solitary part of the grounds, where an old summer-house, rarely frequented, afforded them shelter from the shower.

"Thank goodness we have escaped at last from these horrid people," was her first exclamation, as her head rested on the shoulder of her companion, and she was pressed fondly and familiarly to his side. "Oh! Neville, how I detest them all! They seemed to watch me so and cast on me such suspicious looks, especially that lynx-eyed Miss Sykes, I thought I never should have eluded her vigilance, but I left her gazing on a group of Cupids; I am surprised she did not scare them all away."

"Poor, dear Charlotte, I really pity you," replied Captain Warburton, smiling; "but why ask people to your house who you so much dislike?"

"Oh! because it would seem so particular to leave any one out who is in the society of the place. Besides Sir James would not allow me; I assure you he interferes constantly in the arrangement of my parties. I know not why, but I fear he suspects us; see how he placed himself next me at breakfast; and then again the charming drives we used to enjoy together, how has he destroyed them, by either coming with us or sending my brother. Only imagine if he were to forbid you the house," and she looked tenderly in his face as she spoke.

"Why we would then meet in secret, love; and stolen joys, you know, are always the sweetest," returned Warburton, pressing his lips to hers.

"Ah! tempt me not, faithless one," rejoined the lady; "since I have heard of your elopement with your present wife I have had little confidence in you."

"My wife! poor Katherine!" ejaculated Captain Warburton, starting and covering his face with his hands.

"Do not talk of her now—moments are precious," said Lady Marley, annoyed by the emotion he displayed, "a cold, puritanical creature, incapable of a powerful attachment."

"If that were the case I should not suffer from the arrows of conscience as I now do," returned Captain Warburton; "there never beat in woman's breast a more loving heart than Katherine's, and this it is which at times distresses me, particularly since she nursed me so tenderly during my illness."

"Then repent and return to her, and lead a respectable domestic life; nurse the child for her, and learn to make candle," rejoined Lady Marley, with a sneer; "why should I interfere with such happiness?"

"You are offended, are you, pretty one?" said Warburton, who was perfectly aware of his own power, and frequently exercised it in trying the feelings of the faithless woman; "do you suppose a man can only love one at a time? My heart is divided amongst many!"

"Is it so, Sir?" replied Lady Marley, with a quivering lip; "then I discard it, *tout ou rien*, is my motto," and she rose to go, but he prevented her.

"Poor child! she shall have it all to herself," he said provokingly, as he encircled her with his arm and kissed her repeatedly. "Nay do not pout so, it makes you look so cross; no one shall interfere with your right over me."

"Oh! Neville, you try me too far!" replied Lady Marley, now bursting into tears. "Alas! there is no hope for me on this side the grave; married as you are to another, what can you be to me?"

"Every thing, if you will, beloved one!" he returned. "Shall we fly together, and make a little world between ourselves, forgetting all else besides!"

"Yes, and then be deserted for some fairer object. Neville, Neville, you are not to be trusted—infidelity and fickleness are stamped upon that brow!"

"Towards all but you," rejoined the tempter; "try me, Charlotte, you shall have no cause to repent your sweet confidence, rest assured!"

"Did you not say the same to Miss Atherston," retorted Lady Marley, "and can you imagine that I should be content with the share of your affections which she possesses? Neville, there are times when my brain seems on fire, when I wish from my soul that I had never met you; if I was not happy before as a wife, I was at least contented; but now my bonds are hateful to me!"

"Then burst them at once, and be the dear companion of him who adores you; to the sunny land of Italy we will fly from all persecution!"