

Mrs. T.—That speaks well. (*aside*)—How very much your taste is like Laura's! She is such an ardent admirer of the beauties of Nature.

CAPT. D.—Ah! I assure you, I was long since well aware of that. Congeniality of taste always brings people together so. I am a perfect enthusiast, my dear madam, a perfect enthusiast in these matters. I trust, after this morning's excursion, Miss Medwin and I shall have many pleasant walks together. Oh, it will be so charming!

Mrs. T.—Better still. Laura looks absorbed too (*aside—advancing to Laura*). Will you let me see the sketch, my dear? Is it all finished—*aside to Laura*).

LAURA.—No, it requires a few more touches.

Mrs. T.—Do't you think Laura sketches remarkably well?

CAPT. D.—Amazingly well, madam, I assure you. I have been delighted beyond expression at that sketch. I am so passionately fond of the fine arts! foolishly so, I declare to you.

Mrs. T.—(*pretending to examine the sketch*). Is it all settled I mean—you understand me. (*aside to Laura*).

L.—I hope so.

Mrs. T.—Oh! Laura, you cannot guess who is here. Captain Dashley, you must allow me to introduce a very intimate and dear friend of ours who just arrived from town.

CAPT. D.—The Devil! Ah, I beg ten thousand pardons, ladies. I—I was a little absorbed—your friend—ah! yes—(*looking at his watch*) Heavens, how the morning has flown! I—a—fear, my dear Mrs. Topton, I shall have to deny myself this pleasure, at present. I—a—I have some business matters to attend to this morning of a very pressing nature. I very much regret, but—a—I shall have to bid you good morning. (*bows and exit*).

L.—Captain Dashley appears somewhat startled at the proposed introduction.

Mrs. T.—Do not be alarmed, my dear child, do not be alarmed—that burst of impatience too—dear soul, that he is—I understand it all. His whole soul, all his affections, every thought is centred upon you. He cannot bear the idea of having another thrust upon his notice, or to claim the smallest share of his attention; and was it not very natural for him to suppose that Julia, as your friend, would spend much of her time in your society? And that expression of impatience at the thought of having the free current of his love thus interrupted—how very natural! Fortunate girl, how devotedly he is attached to you!

L.—It is certainly very unfortunate, that he should lavish his affections on one who is incapable of reciprocating them. But you forget that he was not informed of the sex of our friend. You will have to account for the burst of impatience in some other way.