

manly feeling forbade him to show any reluctance, and bowing to Fanny, he passed out.

Joe, thinking his path was quite plain, placed himself at Fan's side. She tossed her head, and without deigning a word to him, she asked me if I was ready, and proceeded to the door. My escort was already provided; and one of Fan's staunch admirers, though not an aspirant for her favor, joined her. She immediately took his arm, and quickly turning so as to place herself on the other side of me, she fairly threw poor Jones *hors du combat*; but he was not easily daunted. He walked with the party, occasionally addressing some remark, which was answered in the most freezing manner, though she rattled gayly with her companion and myself.

I was right glad when the walk was ended and we were snugly ensconced in our own room. Fan was a little pettish, and not inclined to talk as much as usual.

The next morning, just as I was opening my peepers, and recalling myself from the world of dreams, Fan came bounding into my room, with a superb bunch of flowers in her hand.

"Just look," she said, "and see what I have found tied to the handle of the door. How beautiful they are! Who can they be from?"

I thought of Joseph, for he was exceedingly delicate in all his attentions, but I resolved not to insinuate it. As she peeped among the flowers, and inhaled their perfume, she, all at once, espied a note.

"Ah! this will tell me." She opened it, and the flowers were thrown carelessly aside. It was from Joe, praying her forgiveness, if he had offended her. He had read her indignation in her cold manner, and almost angry look, and he pleaded to be forgiven.

That evening, we were sitting, with a few friends, on the vine-covered piazza of the house, gazing out upon a sunset of unusual beauty, when Ernest joined us. His usually serene face wore a troubled, flushed expression, and his greeting was so hurried that I asked him if he was not well.

"No—yes," he stammered, and hesitated. "The truth is, I have had a summons from home, and leave to-morrow. It is very sudden, and I was not prepared for it."

"Does Blanche go with you?"

"No. I leave her behind; and that gives me strong hopes of returning. But I must not stay," he said, "for every moment is precious; but I could not leave the place without coming here, where I have passed so many happy, happy hours."

Fan had been taken so by surprise, at the an-

nouncement of his departure, she had not been able to speak; but now, rallying, she said:

"We shall be sorry to lose you, Ernest; but I hope you will return."

"I only live on *hope*," he said, in a low tone.

Fan was for an instant embarrassed; but soon recovering herself, she shook hands kindly with him; and as the custom was, in that, to city eyes, most primitive place, she walked along with him, through the little yard, to the gate. They stood there a moment or two. I saw Ernest touch her hand once more, and then almost rush away, as if he dared not trust himself with any further expression of feeling.

Fan returned to us, and we were soon again all gaiety, and it was late before our guests left us; but the "good night" came at last; the evening blessing was given and received from the loving parents, and Fan and I were once more in our low, humble, but comfortable attic room.

Fan threw herself into a chair, where she sat full ten minutes—a most unheard-of thing for her—without speaking; then, looking up, she said:

"I don't care: I am thankful he is going away."

"Why, bless me, Fan!" said I, "have you been thinking of Ernest all this time? I am sure, he would not close his eyes, for delight, if he knew it. He looked sad, though, Fan; and you, you blushed so deeply, when he said he was going, that, I am sure, all present must have thought you deeply interested in him."

"I pray you, Lizlie, don't tease me about that: you are too bad. I wish I could get rid of that unfortunate trick of blushing—it works me a world of harm; but see, Lizzie, what am I to do with this? and she held up a small gold ring."

"Where did you get that?" I asked, as I took the ornament—a very neat gold ring, with a thread of dark hair, which I knew to be Ernest's, running through it;—you don't say Ernest gave it to you, and why did you take it?"

"I could not help it. He took my hand, and before I was aware what he was doing, the ring was slipped upon my finger, and he whispered, 'Wear it, dear Fanny, for my sake—do not reject it'—and he was gone. What am I to do with it?"

"Return it to him to-morrow morning, firmly, but kindly."

"He leaves town before I or any one in the house are awake."

"Then you must give it to Blanche, and request her to return it to him."

"I cannot do that: she would never love me again."

"Well then, go to sleep now, silly child, and