

impatience to know who they were, she had dispatched a negro girl to reconnoitre and report. The girl soon came back, her eyes projecting like coffee saucers, and the little braided tags of her hair seemingly standing upright.

"Oh, Miss Julia!" said she, "that 'ar tall, yaller man, done shook hands 'long of Miss Fanny, who kissed him, and called him Uncle William. She said how he done been with the Injuns."

"*Her Uncle William!*" repeated Julia, in amazement. "And who is the other one? His son?"

"Yes, reckon so," said the negro. "They done call him Mr. Camel, or Camlet, or suthin. I tell you he's han'some; and I reckon he's tuk with Miss Fanny. Jiminy hocake! ain't she pooty? She looked a heap han'somer than you—no, I don't mean so—I axes pardon again." And the negro bobbed out of the door, just in time to dodge a ball of soap, which Julia hurled at her head.

"It's of no use fretting so," said Mrs. Carrington, who was present. "The young man is married, for he spoke of his wife."

Julia did not answer, and Mrs. Carrington soon after left the room. When she was gone, Julia muttered to herself, "Uncle William, from the Indies; rich as Croesus, of course. What a fool I was not to go to the party. Most likely, Fanny has won his good graces by this time. However, I'll dress myself and surprise him with my beauty, if nothing else."

Accordingly, the next hour was spent decorating her person, and when Fanny came for her, she was ready to make an assault upon the good opinion of her rich India uncle. Not a thing out of place, from the shining braids of her dark hair to the tiny slipper on her delicate foot.

Fanny's first exclamation on entering the room, was, "How beautiful you look, Julia! It is exceedingly fortunate that you are dressed so becomingly; for, will you believe it, Uncle William is down stairs!"

"Is it possible?" said Julia, affecting much surprise.

"Yes," answered Fanny. "You know father thinks him dead. But come, he is anxious to see you."

Julia arose to go with her sister, and said, "Isn't there a young man with him?"

"How did you know that?" asked Fanny, in some astonishment.

"I saw them from the window," was Julia's ready reply.

Fanny did not think of doubting her sister, and she answered, "It is a Mr. Cameron. He is a cousin to Mrs. Miller."

By this time they had reached the parlor, which was open. Here Julia thought proper to be seized with a fit of modest diffidence, and hesitated a moment before entering the room. Her uncle, however, immediately came forward, and relieved her from all embarrassment, by saying, "And this, I suppose, is Julia. My brother is a happy man to be father of two such charming girls."

Julia received him graciously, but rather haughtily offered him her cold, white hand. "I will not kiss him," thought she; "Fanny did that. It's too childish. I'll be more dignified."

Could she have known the contrast which her uncle was drawing between her own and Fanny's

reception of him, she would not have felt much flattered; but, before her uncle had time to say anything further, Fanny introduced her to Frank, whose keen eye had read her character at a glance, and read it aright, too. His ideas and words were after the following fashion:

"Pshaw! what a bundle of pride and stuck-up-ishness! She's handsome, though, but isn't to be named the same day with Fanny."—"How do you do, Miss Middleton?"—"What an affected little curtsy!"—"Hope to see you well, ma'am." "I'd laugh to see her trip and fall flat."

Such were Frank's thoughts while undergoing the ceremony of an introduction to Julia, who never for a moment doubted she was making an impression upon the handsome young stranger, his supposed wife to the contrary notwithstanding. The introductions being over, Julia seated herself on the sofa, while Fanny took a seat on a low ottoman near her uncle, but partially behind him. She had chosen this place, because she fancied it would screen her somewhat from Frank's eyes, which she felt, rather than saw, were fixed upon her constantly.

During the conversation which followed, Julia, as if by mere accident, mentioned New Orleans. She was anxious to know whether her uncle saw or heard of Dr. Lacey. Her curiosity was soon gratified; for, at the mention of New Orleans Mr. Middleton, as if suddenly recollecting himself, turning to Fanny, "I saw two of your acquaintances in New Orleans, and one of them gave me a most glowing description of you."

"I wonder if it were a gentleman," thought Frank.

Julia's thoughts were similar, and she bit her lip, while Fanny's cheek glowed with unwonted brilliancy, as she quietly asked, "Pray, who was it, Uncle?"

"It was Miss Woodburn, who praised you so highly," answered Mr. Middleton.

Julia immediately asked, "And who was the other acquaintance?"

"Dr. Lacey," answered her uncle. "I spent three weeks at his house."

Without knowing it, Fanny drew nearer to her uncle, and laid her hand on his. He seemed dearer to her from the fact that he had spent so much time with one whose image was ever before her, and whom she vainly fancied she was trying to forget.

Frank noticed Fanny's manner and interpreted it according to his fears. "There's mischief here," thought he. "I hope this Doctor lives in a good locality for yellow fever."

"Is Dr. Lacey about to be married?" asked Julia.

"Married," repeated Mr. Middleton; "I should say matrimony was very far from his thoughts, at present. I fancied he had met with some disappointment, and I sometimes feared lest the fair deceitful one were one of my nieces. Can any one set me right on the subject?"

Mr. Middleton had no idea how painfully his words affected her who sat by his side and looked up so imploringly in his face, as if begging him to stop. There was an embarrassing silence, which Julia broke by saying, "While Dr. Lacey was here, he and Fanny got up a flirtation; but nothing serious will result from it, I reckon."