

MY BEARDED MAID

trary, and I shall go on holding my tongue ; it is better that it should be thought an accident, but I feel sure at bottom, that she did it on purpose, *ma mie*. Monsieur your cousin, that good-for-nothing (with many excuses), my angel, he had had something to do with it, and the good God will find him out, I do hope. I don't mean he poisoned her himself, but he had been making up to her, ever since you went, that it was shocking. They were always together, and his mamma knew it, but said never a word, as she always was an avaricious person, and she thought, no doubt, just as well my boy should have to do with a lady than with those expensive creatures ; but I am not going to talk scandal, *ma mie*, it's only to explain to thee how went the things. Well, two days ago there was a luncheon-party, Madame your aunt, her son, and the Major. Lady Dare was looking very happy and very pretty, I must say, and then Madame your Aunt, she announced like that all of a sudden, that Monsieur your cousin was just engaged to be married to a very rich *jeune fille*, and that she was very pleased about it, and that she was sure Lady Dare also would be pleased to hear of her boy friend's happiness. My idea, *ma mie*, is that your blackguard of a cousin (excuse) he got his mamma to come to that luncheon on purpose to tell of his engagement, as he was afraid to say it himself, and he chose the moment when they were at table all together, so that there would be no scene. Well, my angel, Lady Dare, she had her heart placed right, I assure you. She laughed, and trusted him and his *fiancée*, as gay and proud as could be, but when they were all gone she went to her room