

not. She continued to watch the door in feverish anxiety, until at length her agony was happily removed by the re-entrance of him she desired to see. She uttered an ejaculation of thankfulness, while the long drawn sigh that escaped her, expressed the relief his presence afforded her; she looked in his face, which wore its usually serious and stern expression, but she could not define his thoughts, as he stood with folded arms gazing proudly around him. Once when he was addressed by a gentleman standing behind him, he turned and smiled, but like a sunbeam over the dark and troubled waters it quickly faded away.

On leaving the room she purposely drew near him, in the hope he would have spoken to her, but he allowed her to pass without appearing to see her. Her pride now took the alarm, and tossing back her long ringlets in disdain, she mentally said, while tears rushed to her eyes:

"I could box his ears—that I could. I will never speak to him again, I am determined."

On returning to the ball room she found only a few young people collected, and all in the highest spirits; they rallied her upon her grave looks:

"Why, I vow Colonel Brereton has quite changed you from the merry creature you used to be," remarked one; "indeed I am not surprised, for he is awfully austere; are you not afraid of him? No—you say—I doubt that. Come and let us have a race in the picture gallery before Lady Brereton returns—I always think of Colonel Brereton in petticoats, when I see her draw herself up, and fix her large dark eyes upon me."

The playful cheerfulness of her companions, soon infected the versatile Beatrice, who consented to join them in their sport, and she was laughing most merrily, vaulting over the chairs, and chasing them round the room, when Lady Brereton, accompanied by several of the elders made their appearance. The whole party stood still, while Beatrice hung her head abashed, though a smile lurked on her beautiful lip.

"Upon my word, young ladies," said Lady Brereton, "it is time that your chaperons should return to you. Beatrice could you not have found a more feminine amusement—I am really surprised and shocked."

"It was all our fault, Lady Brereton," said a good-natured girl, stepping forward; "we proposed the romping party."

"I wish you had called me to join you in it," observed Lord Charles, much amused; "it was scarcely fair to monopolise the fun all to yourselves."

"Colonel Brereton, will you have the goodness to order the band to reappear?" rejoined Lady Brereton, with increased dignity and hauteur.

"Come, come, I will not have my little Beatrice vexed," said the good-natured Sir George, who, a spectator of the scene, pitied the increased confu-

sion of our heroine. He drew her arm within his as he spoke, adding: "I remember the day when I would have vaulted over the chairs with her myself; ay, you may laugh, saucy one, but Lady Brereton recollects no doubt, the time when we both ——"

"Sir George, Sir George," interrupted her ladyship, "such reminiscences are out of place; Lady Culverton, shall I show you the portrait I was mentioning to you."

This attracted Sir George, who, delighting in nothing so much as to display his pictures, of which he had a very valuable collection, hurriedly placed the band of Beatrice in Colonel Brereton's, saying, as he did so:

"There, there, if I cannot run after you, I leave you with one who can," and then followed the stately steps of his lady.

Colonel Brereton made no attempt to move, neither did he relinquish the hand thus forced upon him. Beatrice felt inclined to withdraw it, but some secret power prevented her; she would have given worlds to raise her eyes to his, but she could not. Just then Antonio approached his master, and said:

"Major Boileau wishes to speak a few words with you, sir; he waits in the lobby."

"Is he there, tell him I am coming to him instantly," was the quick reply, and hastily leaving Beatrice standing alone, he followed the page from the room.

All her terrors again returned, for she connected the interview with Major Boileau and his supposed quarrel with Lord Stepney, and unable to conceal her feelings she glided from the gay ball, and rushed to the privacy of her own apartment, exclaiming:

"And this is pleasure; what mockery in the term—oh, Mary, Mary, you were right; how can happiness dwell where envy, hatred, jealousy, and every dark passion shew their odious power over us. Worthless finery," she continued, tearing the flowers from her dress, and trampling them beneath her feet, "I will destroy you as the remembrancers of a night full of vexation and trouble." She walked towards the glass, and started back appalled at her own disturbed countenance; every trace of colour had vanished, while care sat on her youthful brow, which was contracted and worn. "What would my sister say were she to see me now?" proceeded the poor girl, weeping bitterly, as she gazed on that form, which but a few hours before had been the admiration of all; "would that she were here to comfort me—I am very miserable—I cannot help dreading the consequences of my folly in not attending to the wishes of Claude, who, I am convinced, is extremely angry, from his not coming near me once since I danced with that hateful Lord Stepney."

She now threw off her dress and every ornament, casting them impatiently on the ground, and then rang violently for Norris, who on attending her