

he had gained a local reputation in his profession. But it had seemed fated that they should not meet, for many times she had entered Belle's house a few moments after he had left it, and more than once he had dropped in for an instant at an evening party just before her entrance or after her departure.

Undoubtedly she was piqued as well as grieved by his strange conduct toward her, but the former was the only feeling she allowed to escape her, even to Belle, who now, in all the dignity of maternity added to wifehood, and with the prudence of an elderly match-maker, catechised Aldeane upon the advantages or disadvantages to be gained by the encouragement of her numerous admirers, and shrewdly feigned to ignore the knowledge upon which, to Arthur, she had long plumed herself, and upon which was still founded the dearest wish of her heart; for, as she truly said, she had now no cares of Arthur's to perplex her, as his success in his profession since the exposure and death of his old enemy, had been unparalleled, and now bade fair to make him in time a wealthy man, even though he should discard any other fortune that might fall to him, as he had done that of his unworthy step-father, which he had suffered to enrich a score of poor relations who had discarded Jonas Davis years before, but who, at the cry of gold, sprang into being to own themselves his nearest, dearest kin.

And so, Arthur being "off her mind," Belle must needs "take Aldeane on," and Frederic Morgan too, of whom she saw much, and could satisfy herself but little. She talked to him in the severest manner of his neglect of his old friend, but could gain nothing from him but that his time was much occupied, that he had no time for formal calls, and other excuses of a like nature, always ending with the declaration, that he should call soon, very soon.

And so Belle, who conjectured every thing, and said