

for whom it was time that he should think of setting out; and when he had obtained them, he would no longer trespass upon her condescension. Sibyl leant her cheek upon her hand, and regarded him patiently till he had done. "My commands," she gravely said, "are of a confidential nature, and I cannot speak them if you sit so far off."

As she tendered her little hand, her features broke through their mock ceremony into a half smile, and there was an enchantment about her which could not be withstood.

"Sibyl," he exclaimed, "why have you taken such pains to torment me?"

"And why have you so ill attended to the injunctions which I gave you?"

"Ill!—Heaven and earth! Have I not laboured to be agreeable till my head is turned topsy-turvy?"

"Oh yes; and hind-side before as well, for it is any thing but right. But did I tell you to pursue this laudable work with fuming and frowning, and doubting and desperation, till I was in an agony lest you should die of your exertions, and leave me to wear the willow?"

The cavalier stated his provocations with much eloquence,

"Dear Sibyl," he continued, "I have passed a sufficient ordeal. If I really possess your love, let me declare mine at once, and send these bar-barians about their business."

"Or rather be sent about your own, if you have any; for you cannot suppose that the specimen which you have given of your patient disposition, is likely to have told very much in your favour."

"Then why not teach them the presumption of their hopes, and tell them that you despise them?"

"Because they are my father's friends, and because, whatever their hopes may be, they will probably wait for encouragement before they afford me an opportunity of giving my opinion thereupon."

"But has there been any necessity to give them so much more of your time,—so many more of your smiles, than you have bestowed upon me?"

"And is it you who ask me this question?—Oh!—is it possible to mete out attentions to those we love with the same indifference which we use towards the rest of the world?—Would nothing, do you think,—no tell-tale countenance,—no treacherous accent betray the secret which it is our interest to maintain? Unkind, to make poor Sibyl's pride confess so much!"

The cavalier did not know whether he ought to feel quite convinced. He counted the rings upon the fingers, which were still locked in his own, three times over.

"Sibyl," he at last said, "I cannot bear them to triumph over me even in their own bright fancies. If you are sincere with me, let us anticipate the slow events of time,—let us seek happiness by the readiest means,—and, trust me, if it is difficult to obtain consent to our wishes, you are too dear to despair of pardon for having acted without it."

"And you would have me fly with you?" Sibyl shrank from the idea:—her pride was no longer assumed in sport. "You do well," she resumed, "to reproach me with the duplicity which I have practised. It is but just to suppose that she who has gone so far, would not scruple to make the love which has been lavished upon her the inducement for her disobedience; that the pride which has yielded so much, would be content to be pursued as a fugitive, and to return as a penitent."

"Then, Sibyl, you do not love me?"

"I am not used to make assurances of that kind, any more than I am inclined to submit to the charge of deceit."

"Methinks, Lady Sibyl," he replied, with somewhat of bitterness, "you very easily take offence to-night. It certainly is better to be free from one engagement before we enter upon another."

Sibyl's heart beat high, but she did not speak.

"It is possible that you may have mistaken your reasons for enjoining me to silence; for it is, no doubt, advisable that your more eligible friends should have the opportunity of speaking first."

Sibyl's heart beat higher, and the tears sprang to her eyes, but her head was turned away.

"We have staid too long," she said, with an effort at composure.

"I thank you, Lady Sibyl," he replied, rising haughtily to depart, "for allowing me to come to a right understanding. And now—"

Her anger had never been more than a flash,—she could hardly believe him serious, and if he was, he would soon repent.

"And now," she interrupted him, relapsing into her loveliest look of raillery, "Childie Wilful would be glad of his picture again?"

"You certainly will oblige me by restoring it."

"Why do you not ask Sir Lubin for it?"

"Lady Sibyl, I am serious; and I must beg to remark that it can be but an unworthy satisfaction to retain it for a boast to your new lovers."

"I do not see that there is any thing to boast of in it. The face is not a particularly handsome one, and as for him for whom it is meant, he has never made a figure in any history excepting his own letters. Here is one in my dressing-case,—I pray you stand still now while I read over the wondrous exploits which you performed in your