

transforms every one into stone, who enters it," thought Beatrice, stealing a look at him; "if they think to metamorphose me, they will find themselves mistaken."

Lady Julia had watched with a keen eye the meeting between Colonel Brereton, and our heroine, and seemed fully satisfied with its coldness, until he lingered by her side talking, when she became evidently restless and uneasy, calling his attention to a book of prints which had been sent that morning to the Abbey, and dinner being announced at the moment he approached her, he could not avoid offering her his arm to take her down, while Beatrice fell to the care of Lord Charles Clapperton, a gay, frivolous young man, who had begged to be introduced to her, and who was the last Colonel Brereton could have wished to see placed next to her, as he knew that he would encourage her in all those sportive sallies, which he desired should be kept in check before Lady Brereton, until she became better acquainted with her, and his eyes were anxiously turned upon her, each time that her laugh was heard at the satirical, and lively remarks made by her companion, who spared no one present.

"You at least have escaped the chilling influence of this sombre place," said Beatrice. "I had begun to fear the fairy's wand had touched you all."

"Even stone must melt before the power of so much beauty," replied Lord Charles, bowing:

"Pray try its magical effect on Sir George's wig which looks as if it had come fresh from the hands of the sculptor."

Beatrice turned in the direction, and as she marked the stiff flaxen curls that adorned the head of the good old man, she could not restrain her mirth.

"Hush," said Lord Charles: "are you intimate with Colonel Brereton?"

"Rather so," returned Beatrice, blushing; "why do you ask?"

"Because he appears disposed to give you a good scolding whenever he gets you in private; dare you encounter his eyes?"

Beatrice involuntarily looked towards him as this was said, when she met his fixed stern gaze rivetted upon herself, which, however, instantly softened into saddened expression that touched her with shame and regret. She knew the affectionate son he was, and that to witness her ridicule of his aged father must pain him, and her eyes fell beneath his, while she maintained a profound silence, until she withdrew with the ladies, notwithstanding the provoking remarks made by Lord Charles, who whispered:

"I see that you fear him. I had given you credit for more spirit; yet perhaps he is a favourite,—if so I beg your pardon."

"Beatrice gladly returned to the drawing-room, for she felt wearied with the state and form of the tedious banquet, which but for the gaiety of Lord Charles would have passed still more heavily. She

sat down at a table to amuse herself with some prints, while Lady Julia, running over to Lady Brereton, cast herself on her knees before her, calling her 'cara madre,' and many other endearing terms, all of which were received with apparent pleasure, and reciprocal feelings of affection by her ladyship, who, as she stroked her face, turned to Beatrice, asking her why she wore such a profusion of long ringlets."

"Why should I not?" enquired our heroine, surprised.

"Because this is the fashionable head now," observed Lady Brereton, alluding to Lady Julia's, who smiled superciliously.

"Is it, then, I think it very ugly," retorted Beatrice coolly, and again turning to the prints.

"My young friend, you should not give your opinions so freely," said Lady Brereton with gravity; "it is as dangerous as the gifts of mimicry and ridicule, which will only make you enemies."

Beatrice felt her cheeks glow at these words, and a slight palpitation at the heart, they were so pointedly spoken; yet she made no answer, and the conversation then turning upon things and people to whom she was a stranger, she seemed to be entirely forgotten. Music was proposed on the re-entrance of the gentlemen, but she took no part in anything passing round her, nor heeded their presence, for that sense of loneliness had crept over her which must ever be experienced on leaving home for the first time, and finding ourselves amongst those who care not for us. The sounds of Lady Julia's harp at length roused her, when raising her head she perceived Colonel Brereton standing near, and intently surveying her.

"Your gaiety seems vanished, Miss Annesley," he said, drawing near. "Shall I summon Lord Charles to restore it?"

"No! I hate strangers," replied Beatrice pettishly; "and here I see none else."

"Then your hate is extended to all present; am I to think so?"

Beatrice was silent:

"I hope you do not repent having indulged us by coming to the Abbey?" continued Colonel Brereton.

"Indulged," replied Beatrice, looking up in his face astonished; "who have I indulged by coming?"

"Not yourself, I fear, if I may judge by your words and manner."

"Is there no pain attached to leaving all we love—to hearing no kindly voice—to seeing none near who can sympathize in our feelings?" asked Beatrice; her large blue eyes filling with tears.

"You cannot make that case your own surely," said Colonel Brereton, now sitting down by her.

"Indeed, then I do; even you treat me as if we had never met before."

"How so?"