

flirting and taking refreshment after their exertions.

"Why does he not come?" she asked herself again and again. "He promised in his letter that he would be here, that he would see me at the ball. It is already quite late and he has not put in an appearance yet. I did not think he would have treated me thus. I do not know what to make of it. What could it have been he meant to tell me to-night about the baronet? Something must have happened to him. And Oh Percy, why don't you come?"

But he came not, and the evening dragged wearily on for the unfortunate Fanny, who took no interest whatever in the mirth which was going on all around her. The whole place seemed to her to be whirling madly round in cruel disregard of her state of mind, the crowds turned her dizzy, the very perfume of the flowers which filled the air stupefied her, she walked on as in a dream. She had by this time given up all hopes of the lieutenant's turning up, and was heartily wishing that the festivities were at an end, in order that she might have a few moments of rest and quiet to collect her thoughts and renew her tired energies. About eleven o'clock, as she was listlessly passing through the great hall of the house on her way to the ball-room, she encountered the baronet, who recognized her in spite of her disguise and begged the favour of a dance with her. Deeply as she detested him by this time she acquiesced, having no reasonable excuse ready for doing otherwise, and they passed on to join the throng of dancers on the spacious floor. Her mother, passing near them, saw them and smiling said to herself, "Fanny is coming round all right. She has evidently thought better of her decision, and will soon be completely reconciled to the baronet, and then my plans for her future will be in a fair way toward being realized." The Major also noticed the fact of his daughter and Sir James being together, and it was not altogether with a feeling of pleasure that he did so; for, though he had been talked over by his wife into declaring himself in favour of this match with the baronet, he liked Lieut. Fairbank better than the former, and moreover he felt sorry for him in having to lose his promised bride.

The baronet was in high spirits, and whispered

innumerable delicate compliments in the ear of his graceful partner as they careered through the room to the jubilant music of the latest waltz. But only in her ear did he whisper them, for they had no other effect on her save to rather weary her of his presence. Once they passed a couple strolling along the corridor, the man got up to represent a mediæval knight and the damsel on his arm masquerading as Old Mother Hubbard. The girl spoke a few words to her companion, and the baronet started perceptibly at the sound of her voice. After that they went out to the conservatory. The knight and his lady followed them unperceived. This conservatory, which was not the large one, but a smaller one in which the Major kept his pet rarities, including some priceless orchids, was deserted. Scarcely had they seated themselves when the second couple appeared before them, and the well-known voice of Lieut. Percival Fairbank addressed the baronet.

"Sir James, may I ask if you have ever met this lady?"

At the same instant the wizened old creature at his side drew off her mask, disclosing the features of a handsome young woman, decidedly French-looking, and of a dashing and rather stagey appearance.

The baronet rose precipitately, knocking over as he did so a pot containing a magnificent specimen of the rare *Odontoglossum Harryanum*, and smashing the priceless flower to pieces.

"Louise!" he gasped, and then recollecting himself addressed his remarks to the lieutenant. "I do not know this lady, and to what may I ask do I owe the honour of this interruption?"

"I think you must be mistaken, Sir James," said the girl, for I know you very well, too well, in fact. But possibly you forget the time when you were foolish enough to promise to love, comfort and honour me till death us should part, and I was foolish enough to believe you. I am not at all anxious to keep you up to that promise, but I thought I would like a little revenge for the way in which you have treated me lately, and so I came over to have my finger in the pie you seem to have been so successful in making. It's no use protesting ignorance, baronet, I have witnesses with me, and I'm all ready to make it lively for you if you struggle. I may not be an