

asked Mrs. Morrison, in a breathless torrent of questions.

"I don't know as I shall tell you; I am not obliged to impart to you everything I know. That was not in the marriage contract, and it is nice to have a little secret from you, now and then."

"Now, Harry, don't tease me so," said Mrs. Morrison, throwing herself at the feet of her husband, and gazing up into his kind manly face, while she laid her soft white hand into his ample palm. "You know I have been worried enough about this odious affair, and if you can give me any clue to get me out of the spell that seems woven about me, I wish you would; I have really been thinking, this morning, it would put me into a nervous fever; if I had not taken the girl from her parents, and promised to protect her, I should not feel it so much."

"There is no resisting you, Annie dear; you know how to cheat me out of every thing; I never should dare to become an 'Odd Fellow,' or belong to any secret society; though I am naturally secretive, you have such a coaxing way with you, you wile the very heart out of my breast, look into its every nook, and read all the lines traced thereon, and I thank God you do, dearest; no one can appreciate more than I the wealth of that loving and sympathizing heart, which is the silver lining to all the clouds which chase over my horizon," and the husband, with an unusual burst of emotion, stooped down, and kissed the fair brow that was turned towards him. "But now, to satisfy your curiosity, the handsomest man in town, and the one you most approve in your circle of acquaintances, is our Marah's 'love in the mist.' Can you guess now?"

"Why! not Hermann Müller, surely!"

"The very same."

"I don't believe it. Some malicious person has got up the story, to have a laugh at his expense."

"Then he must have a great spite against himself, for he told me —"

"Why, Harry, why will you try to quiz me so? It is impossible —"

"Well, Annie, hear my story, and then judge for yourself. I was writing, this afternoon, when Francisco came in, and said Mr. Müller wished to speak to me; I told him to show him in. As he entered, I saw there was something wrong, for his face was flushed, and his whole bearing that of a man under strong excitement. I shook hands with him and asked him to be seated, but he paced up and down the room. I waited for his agitation to subside a little, then I said: What is it, Hermann, what distresses you so?—

have you had bad news from home, or have you got into any pecuniary difficulties? Can I aid you in any way?" He turned quickly round.

"Is it true," demanded he, "that you are going to send Ma—— your—— that is—— Marah—home, by the Cleopatra?"

"Yes," replied I, "it is our intention to do so."

"Why is it, Mr. Morrison, what induces this unexpected cruelty to the poor girl?"

"Mr. Müller," said I, "I do not understand you, or recognise your right to question me on my domestic affairs; still, as I have always had the kindest feelings towards you, I will not refuse to answer you; both Mrs. Morrison and myself have been kept in a state of great anxiety about the girl; we feel responsible for her good conduct, and to restore her safely to her parents; but for the last few months, she has been carrying on—an intrigue—seems too harsh a word, but I hardly know what else to use—at any rate, a secret acquaintance, which we fear will lead to her ruin. We can get no clue to it; she is obstinate, and indeed so changed in every respect, that we can no longer keep her; if she would be frank, and confide in us, it would be far better."

"Oh! do not blame her," replied he eagerly; "let the censure fall where it ought. I am almost ashamed to confess it, yet it is nevertheless true, I am the secret lover of Marah."

"You! Hermann! Impossible!"

"I do not wonder you consider it impossible," continued he. "I look upon it myself as a delusion; still it is one which no power I can exert over myself, enables me to dispel. I am sometimes tempted to believe the stories of love potions, spells, &c., which I hear among the poor ignorant negroes, it is so impossible for me to explain the mysterious feeling which has drawn me to Marah. But it exists—I love her—now woman has ever so deeply stirred the fountains of my heart, and were I at this moment in a situation to marry, I should glory in giving her the protection of a husband."

"You certainly must be insane," replied I. "Think, Mr. Müller, of the difference in your positions. Marah is entirely uneducated,—what sympathy can you find—with her?"

"I know not, I care not, I love her!"

"Think of your family at home. What would your sisters say to be obliged to introduce to the refined and cultivated circles of Hamburg, this uneducated half-caste girl, as their brother's wife? think of the long years of misery you must drag on, after the delusion has passed, as pass it must, and you find no sympathy in the companion you have chosen for life; your tastes she cannot appreciate; hers is not a mind you can ever train;