

"You know very well," exclaimed the young man, "that I did not come for her."

"Well, well, you had better not stay talking with me; you will be observed."

"Oh! I will withdraw, if you are afraid of being seen in my company."

"It is not for myself I am afraid," said Delphine, "but I dread lest your papa should scold you."

My readers will have perceived by this time, not only that the pretty Delphine was a spoiled child, pert and wayward, who had been indulged in every whim, and who consequently indulged herself in any kind of impertinence she chose; but also that this was by no means her first meeting with the diffident, but well-meaning Arthur de Lozeraie, over whom she felt she had gained an ascendancy, which she could not resist the temptation of making use of, and for whom, to do her justice, she entertained a sincere regard, although the error of her education somewhat warped the manner of it's showing itself.

But to return from my digression. No sooner had Delphine uttered these words, than Arthur, with an extraordinary exertion of courage, took the seat so lately vacated by Mademoiselle de Favieri, and again solicited her to dance.

Mademoiselle Durand could not entirely suppress a smile at the triumph she had obtained, especially as Mademoiselle de Favieri was a witness to her proceedings; yet she assumed a tyrannical air, and gave the timid youth a decided refusal.

"But you intend to dance with others I suppose?" said he.

"Perhaps I do," replied the tormentor.

"Very well, we shall see."

At this moment, Leopold approached to request the honour of her hand, but she replied—

"Excuse me, I have promised Monsieur le Viscomte de Lozeraie."

"Ah! you are an angel!" cried Arthur, in a suppressed tone.

"It was not for your sake I refused him, I assure you," said Delphine.

Arthur thought this merely a subterfuge, but there was some truth in it; for in following up the mischievous propensity for teasing her lover, which had just taken possession of her, she would gladly have accepted the invitation, had some young man of rank and fashion accosted her at that moment, instead of her father's clerk; but her vanity could not resist the temptation of making the poor clerk feel that

his pretensions were but little regarded beside the highborn M. de Lozeraie.

"Then you will dance with me?" replied Arthur.

"Neither with you nor any one else. Why don't you go and ask Mademoiselle Favieri."

"I have no wish to dance with her, Delphine."

"Perhaps so, but if your papa wishes it, you must, you know."

Arthur, piqued exceedingly, made no reply, and the contradance was just going to begin, when he saw his father beckoning to him.—Vexed as he was at being thus compelled to shew his ready obedience, he instantly quitted his seat and went towards the Count, who said to him drily—

"Have you asked Mademoiselle Favieri to dance yet?"

"I have had no opportunity, sir; she left her seat just as I came towards her."

"Who is this young girl with whom you have been talking? You seem to know her."

"She is the daughter of M. Durand the wealthy banker, who——."

"Well, well," interrupted the Count. "I know who Mathieu Durand is—a sort of plebeian upstart—one of the canaille."

"They call him very honourable, upright in his dealings, and in every sense of the word, an honest man."

"And what, the devil, should he be but honest?" cried the Count, hurried beyond his usual guarded style of diction by his vexation at finding his son so much interested in the family. "You would not have him a knave would you? At any rate, I will trouble you not to be so attentive to his daughter."

Arthur was sadly at a loss for a reply to the home thrust of his father, when he was luckily relieved by the coming up of the Marquis de Berizy and M. Durand himself, who accosted M. le Comte, and begged to be allowed a few moments conversation with him. They were stepping aside for this purpose, when Delphine approached, and said to M. Durand—

"Are we going to stay here much longer, papa?"

"Why, Delphine, the ball has scarcely begun," replied he.

"That may be," rejoined the spoiled child, "but I am tired of it and want to go home."

"Whenever you choose, dear, or rather as soon as I have spoken a word or two with these gentlemen on business."

"Good heavens! do you bring business ever into a ball-room?"