

unless there exists the bond of a mutual unreserved and sympathetic confidence! from the basis of your actual knowledge that the charm of girls friendships lies in the secrets, you reason by analogy to your general conclusion. Your logic may not be sound, but your apology for an illy concealed desire to know something of my past life is clever and deserving of a practical acknowledgment.'

"You have given my generalizations a personal application, Eleanor, that is hardly fair. But we are to be friends as well as sisters-in-law. Certainly it is much easier to be friends with persons whom one knows all about—then there is no danger of offending their prejudices, or hurting their feelings, or in any way treading on the corns of their sensibilities, you understand. Besides, in our immediate world, there are only three—you and Ralph and I, and a left out feeling is so distressingly hard to bear. Now, don't you think the lonely vista of this evening stretching out so drearily before us might be appropriately filled by a story—your story?"

"Perhaps it is but right that I should try to make up to you for the storm-stayed guests whom to-morrow will bring to us; perhaps, on this, the anniversary of the most eventful night of my life, I am moved to tell you of much that is very sorrowful, with little that is pleasant. Be that as it may, Lily, you shall have my story. Some people's lives I think are made up of trivial troubles, paltry pleasures, so that, looking back, not one event cuts sharply the mist curtain ever hanging between the present and the past; others have their grand flashes of extravagant pleasures and extraordinary pain, with long, monotonous, dull valleys between the mountains of existence; my life has been one of these, the last. The first of what I am about to tell you is not so much what I myself remember as what my maid Fenton has told me.

"You have never been at the little village of Ste. Cécile, in the department of the Somme. You may go there with Ralph and me next year. Such a beautiful, rapid stream the Somme is, there, or at least I think so; but then people so often exalt into the region of the beautiful any physical feature that is pleasantly or tenderly connected with themselves. The early, beautiful part of my life was all spent with mamma, literally on the banks of the Somme, for, on the meadow sloping downward from the Auberge Ste. Cécile, she taught me, and played with me, and lived for me.

"The Auberge itself was a low, two storied stone house, with a