

conscience which had cried out against the deed she had done.

'It does not matter,' she thought. 'That tie was severed years ago,—by his own act, too. The king shall go. But will he see it! Men do not always observe such things,' and then, lest he should not quaff the cup of bitterness prepared for him, she wrote on a tiny sheet of gilt-edged paper, 'Look on Rosamond's third finger.'

This she carefully sealed and gave to Rosamond, bidding her hand it to Mr. Browning, and saying in answer to her look of inquiry, 'It is about a little matter concerning yourself. He can show it to you, if he thinks proper!'

'The omnibus, Miss, for the cars,' cried a servant at the door, and with a hurried good-bye to her friends, Rosamond departed and was soon on her way to Riverside.

CHAPTER VII.

MAKING LOVE.

An accident had occurred to the downward train, and Rosamond was detained upon the road for a long time, so that it was already dark when she reached the Granby depot. Wishing to surprise Mr. Browning, she started for home on foot, leaving her trunks in charge of the baggage master. All around the house was still, and stepping into the hall she was about passing up the stairs, when the parlour door suddenly opened, throwing a glare of light upon her face. The same instant some one caught her round the neck, and kissing her twice, only released her when she exclaimed, 'Mr. Browning, I am surprised at you!'

'Mr. Browning? Thunder! Just as though I was my uncle!' cried a familiar voice, and looking at the speaker, Rosamond recognized Ben Van Vechten! He had come to Riverside the day previous, he said, and hearing she was expected, had waited at the depot four mortal hours, and then returned in disgust.

'But how did you know me?' she asked, and he replied, 'By your daguerreotype, of course. There is but one such beautiful face in the whole world.'

He was disposed to be complimentary, and Rosamond was not sorry when his mother appeared, for in her presence he was tolerably reserved. Mrs. Van Vechten greeted Rosamond politely, but the old *hauteur* was there, and her manner seemed to say, 'If you are educated and refined, I can't forget that you were once my waiting-maid.'

'Where is Mr. Browning?' asked Rosa-

mond, and Ben replied, 'Oh, up in his den having the snakes. He mopes there all the time. Can't you break him of the blues?'

'I'll go and try,' answered Rosamond, and she started up the stairs, followed by Ben whose mother called him back, bidding him, in a low voice, 'Stay where he was, and not make a fool of himself.'

She could trust her brother, but not her son, and she thus did the former the greatest favour she could have done—she let him meet young Rosamond Leyton alone. The evening was quite chilly for July, and as, since the receipt of Miss Porter's note, Mr. Browning had seemed rather agueish, there was a fire burning in the grate, and it cast its shadows upon him as he sat in his accustomed chair. His back was toward the door, and he knew nothing of Rosamond's return until two, soft, white hands were placed before his eyes, and a voice which tried to be unnatural, said, 'Guess who I am.'

'Rosamond—darling—have you come back to me again?' he exclaimed, and starting up, he wound his arm about her, and looked into her face, expecting, momentarily, to hear her say, 'Yes, I know it all.'

But Rosamond did not say so. She merely told him how glad she was to be at home once more, in her delight forgetting that Marie Porter had said she loved the man who held her closely to his side and smoothed her wavy hair even while his heart throbbed painfully with memories of the past and trembled for the future. He longed to speak of her room-mate, but he dared not betray his knowledge of her existence, and he sat there waiting, yet dreading to hear the hated name.

'Did you room alone?' he asked at last, and now remembering the words, 'You do love him,' Rosamond moved quickly from his side. 'She does know,' he thought, and a silent moan of anguish died upon his lips. But Rosamond did not know—the movement was actuated by mere maidenly reserve, and sitting down directly opposite him, she told him of Miss Porter, whom she said she liked so well.

'How much of an invalid is she?' asked Mr. Browning, when he could trust his voice to speak.

'Her health is miserable,' returned Rosamond, 'She has the heart disease, and her waiting-maid told me she was liable to die at any time if unusually excited.'

It might have been because Rosamond was there that Mr. Browning thought the room was brighter than it had been before, and quite calmly he listened while she told him more of her new friend.