

French property in the Boulonnais, as they had talked of doing, long ago, in their childish plans together.

Perhaps—for Mr. Valentine had hinted that this, too, lay within the power of the great fortune Miss Marney had bequeathed to Louis—he would rebuild Orsett, and settle down in the West-country.

Would he be very much altered? His letters did not seem to suggest it, though she was conscious of more reserve in them than formerly. He spoke less of himself and his wishes, and his plans for the future, and more of his work.

She thought and thought of Louis,—but of her cousin Denis, playing softly in the fire-light, on poor Miss Marney's new piano, beneath her old gilt harp—she scarcely thought at all.

His perfect self-possession and friendliness had banished altogether the embarrassment which Cecilia's insinuations had provoked.

She rested contentedly in his presence, and enjoyed his companionship, with all the gratitude that the remembrance of her loneliness before his advent, could inspire.

He longed, yet feared, to disturb this happy unconsciousness.

"It is too soon," thought the Duke; but he too, was dreaming of happiness to come, as he played on and on, in the warm, spring-scented room; and watched the pointed shadows cast by her downcast black lashes upon Jeanne's face, which glowed in the clear red light of the dying fire.