

"You told me that night," he says, with an impetuosity that is as unlike his usual manner as this deeply moved passionate man is as unlike phlegmatic Longworth Baymouth knows, "that you did not absolutely dislike me. How is it now? Have I compelled your dislike again?"

"No," she slowly answers, "you have not. I ought never to have disliked you, for you were good to us, Monsieur Longworth, and meant well. But, oh! believe me, it would have been better if you had never let us come."

He goes on without heeding her last words—

"You own you do not dislike me. It seems a difficult thing to draw admissions from you; but will you admit also that it may be possible for you one day to care for me?"

"I think it may be possible."

"No one else has any claim on you?"

"No one in the whole wide world."

"Then I will wait," he says, earnestly, "and while I wait, trust. Only be prudent. I will not hurry your decision; I will give you time. No, do not speak; I have more at stake than you give me credit for, and you are excited and annoyed now. I will wait for your decision, and I believe you will come to me one day soon, and of your own choice tell me all. Reine"—once again he takes her hands—"how shall I convince you you have no truer friend than I—no one in all the world you can more implicitly rely on? If I have been imperious, pardon me; if I felt less deeply I might be more collected and courteous; but my whole heart has gone out to you, and I cannot recall it if I would. Think this over, dearest Reine, and come to me and tell me your troubles. I can be Durand's friend as well, if he needs one, for your sake."

She withdraws her hands and covers her face, moved to her very heart.

"Oh! you are good, you are kind, you are generous," she says, in a stifled voice; "but it is all in vain. I have no right to speak; I am bound by promise, and I cannot betray a trust."

"You can ask those who have bound you to free you. Surely you must see that this is right. You have proved sufficiently how thoroughly you can be silent and true. Prove to your plighted

husband in turn how thoroughly you can confide in and trust him!"

He stops and touches her cheek with his lips; then before she can speak or look up is gone. The slight caress awakens within her a curious sort of tenderness. She stands and watches him out of sight—pain, regret, yearning in her eyes, and stronger and deeper than either beneath. Then she sits down, white and unnerved, and looks blankly before her at the fast darkening sea and so when the summer night falls it finds her.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"THE RIVALS."

"FRANK," says Miss Harriott, "answer me this. Did you or did you not tell me on board the *Hesperia* that you were only going to make a flying visit to Baymouth, for the sole purpose of building a yacht, and were then going virtuously and dutifully home to Georgia to see your mother and uncle? Did you, I say or did you not?"

There is severity in Miss Harriott's tone, dignified reproof in Miss Harriott's eye. We say "eye" emphatically, for while she keeps one upon the culprit the other is fixed in much distaste upon the little mud puddles in the road through which she is daintily picking her way. The afternoon is delightful, breezy, crisp, clear; but the morning has been rainy, hence the mud.

"Did you, or did you not?" categorically repeats the lady, and Mr. Dexter laughs lazily.

"On board the *Hesperia* was three whole months ago. How is a fellow to carry his mind back over such a period as that? I remember well enough your saying—need I mention that every saying of yours is indelibly imprinted on this heart—that you preferred Baymouth to Venice. If I prefer it to Georgia in August, who is to blame me? Not you, Miss Harriott; so smooth away that frown, and smile once more on the most abject of your adorners."

Miss Marie Landelle, sauntering by Frank's side, her pink-lined parasol casting a faint roseate glow over her pearl fair face, laughs faintly. These two are in front; behind come Mr. Longworth and Reine; Miss Harriott in the