

things. For so much condescension I am indeed grateful."

"And you will go?"

"No, Petite, I will not. If my staying annoys you I regret it; for believe me, my little one, I would not willingly give you annoyance. I will remain until Marie returns. Who can tell when we may meet again? Not until the grandmother dies, and the future is secure—and she looks as if she might live for ever, that stately grandmamma. I must speak one parting word to Marie—then indeed——"

Reine sighs resignedly. It is of no use contesting the point. Durand and Marie will go on their own way with very little heed to her counsel.

"You may as well say your parting word now then, Leonce," she says resolutely, "for this is the very last *fête-a-fête* we will have. As long as you stay in Baymouth, I shall remain strictly in the house. I should not have met you to-day, but it was necessary you should hear of Marie's departure first from me. Now I shall say adieu, and meet you no more."

"Monsieur Longworth commands this?"

"That is my affair. My grandmother forbids it, people talk and that is enough. You know how I abhor everything clandestine. Go or stay as you please, I will trouble myself about it no more."

"Petite," he says, with real feeling, "You are my good angel now and always. I ought not to have come. But I swear to you that when Marie returns I will go. I will be patient and wait, although it seems almost impossible, and she is so cold—heavens, so cold. Adieu, my little sister, and a thousand thanks for all your goodness."

He kisses the hands he holds. At the moment a man passes along the opposite pavement—Mr. Longworth is on his way to dinner. He lifts his hat, and passes rapidly on.

Reine flushes with vexation and draws away her hands.

"Leonce, we are in the street, how can you forget yourself. Monsieur Longworth saw us."

"Well, Petite," Durand says, coolly, "and what then. A brother may kiss his sister's hand. Mr. Longworth is on

his way to dinner and will favour me with more languid grand seigneur airs than ever. He does me the honour to be jealous, Reine. *Ma foi*, I appear to be a cause of jealousy to more than one gentleman in your little country town."

Reine leaves him abruptly and goes home, feeling vexed with Leonce for his salute, with Longworth for having seen it, with Marie for her departure, with herself for no particular reason—with all the world, in fact. But she is too generous and frank-hearted for moods and fancies, and sits down to the piano and plays away her vapours. Presently it grows too dark, and then she rises, takes a shawl, and hurries away to her favourite twilight seat on the garden wall.

She sits a very long time, her hands clasped in her lap, her eyes fixed dreamily on the water, and thinks. Five months scarcely have passed since she came to this place, and how much has happened—more than in all her life before. She was unhappy at first, but that has worn away. Leonce frets her; but that is only a passing annoyance, nothing deep.

A subtle sense of happiness has come to her of late; she accepts it without caring to analyze its nature too closely. Her grandmother has grown more kind and tolerant since her engagement—perhaps it is that. She likes Miss Harriott more than likes her. It is always good, and restful and comfortable to be with her. A real woman friend is such a true and satisfactory thing. She likes Baymouth—dull but not dreary, monotonous but not wearisome. And then there is Mr. Longworth. She pauses in her musing with a smile and a faint blush. Yes, there is always Mr. Longworth. It is well, after all, to have one's future husband chosen for one—one can take him and feel that self-will and sentiment—dangerous things always—have nothing to do with it. Yes, certainly it is well—they manage these things best in France, there can be no doubt.

Mr. Longworth is very good—he is a husband one can be proud of, he has a generous and noble heart, he is not mercenary, or he would be Madame Windsor's heir to-day, and she and her sister toiling in London for a scanty living. How very handsome and gallant he