

sent and distrait, plays at random, and exasperates her side to madness. At the end of the second, she throws down her mallet, and declares she will spoil sport no longer. She disappears, and the game and the laughter go on without her. But presently they tire of balls and hoops; and music, with a quadrille on the grass, is proposed.

"Where is Reine? She will play," suggests grandmamma Windsor.

Madame does not think her younger granddaughter especially ornamental, and so decides she shall on all occasions make herself particularly useful.

"She went in that direction. I will go and find her," says Mr. Longworth.

He goes at once, and pending her discovery the party pair off, and stroll about in the moonlight. That luminary has quite arisen by this time, and although it is ten o'clock the night is almost midday clear. Evidently Mr. Longworth has watched Mdlle. Reine, for he goes directly to where she is sitting. A low wall at the extreme end of Mrs. Windsor's back garden, or orchard, separates it from the shelving shore, and on this low wall Reine is sitting. The bay, all smooth and polished as a great mirror, lies before her; boats come and go; one merry party afar off have a concertina, and the music comes sweetly and faintly on the still night. The moon shines full on Reine's face, on the pale yellow dress, the black ribbon around her waist, and the coral ornaments she wears. She is always picturesque; she is more picturesque than ever to-night.

She looks up as the footsteps approach, and he sees no shadow of change in her face as he draws near. She does not look surprised, she does not look annoyed, she does not look curious; she glances up at him with nothing in the steadfast brown eyes that Longworth can make out but serene indifference. He comes quite near, and leans against the wall.

"They are going to dance, Ma'amselle Reine," he says; "they want you to play."

"Do they?" she says, making no motion to rise. "There are others who can play, I believe. Who sent?"

"Mrs. Windsor."

"Ah!" a slight smile curls Reine's

lip—she looks at him this time with a glance almost of contempt. "Monsieur," she says, "did she send you?"

"No, mademoiselle, I volunteered. I wanted to speak to you privately just a moment. I have wanted to for some time, but you do not give me an opportunity—this is why I have followed you. I wish to ask you, Mademoiselle Reine, if you will do me the honour to be my wife?"

CHAPTER XX.

"THE WOOING O'T."

The words are spoken. He stands looking at her quite calmly, but rather pale, and beyond all shadow of doubt in profound earnest. He has startled even Mdlle. Reine out of her admirable nonchalance. She looks up at him—stunned.

"Monsieur!" she faintly exclaims.

"I am afraid I have been abrupt," he says, still quietly, yet with a certain depth of feeling in his voice; "I fear I have surprised you. And yet I thought —"

The colour that has left it rushes back into her face, flushing it for a moment from forehead to chin.

"Oh, do not stop!" she cries out; "go on! Say what you thought, what you know—that my grandmother has asked you to marry one of us, that she has ordered us to marry you whenever you did us the honour to ask! And I am the one! Oh, *mon Dieu! mon Dieu!*"

She covers her face with her hands—a sudden, passionate, despairing gesture there is no mistaking. In the moonlight Longworth, already pale, turns perfectly white.

"Mademoiselle——" he begins, hurriedly.

"Oh! wait," she says, in a stifled voice; "only one moment. I am not going to say no; you know I am not going to say no. And I ought to have been prepared. Wait only one moment, I entreat."

He waits. Were ever moments as long as hours before? Then her hands fall, and clasp hard together in her lap, and she looks at him with dry and dreary eyes.

"Forgive me," she says; "I ought not, I know. Since it had to be one of