

"What am I to do? I deserve your contempt—more than your contempt; but I think if you knew what I suffer, even you would spare me. I want to write to Reine, I have writton—you will you give me her address?"

"I do not know it. She is in New York, O'Sullivan tells me, safe and well, with friends of his. But her address he will not give—it is her own command. Give me your letter, and he will forward it."

She hands it to him, and stands looking so downcast and sorrowful that it touches him.

"Do not blame yourself too much," he says, kindly. "We have all been wrong, but regrets are useless. To err is human, and we have all shown ourselves *very* human. To forgive is divine, and knowing your sister as I know her now, I have a conviction that she will one day forgive us."

She lifts her eyes to his face, and he sees tears trembling in the gold brown beauty of their depths.

"Monsieur," she falters. "is there any sort of news of—*him*?"

"Durand? None, I am thankful to say. He is too clever a fellow to be caught. Make your mind easy, they will not find him."

"What a wretch you most think him," she says, covering her face, with a sort of sob; "and yet he is not. A gambler he may be—that is his besetting passion, but a thief—oh! no, no, he is not that. My going with Mrs. Dexter maddened him—he wanted to follow, to do perhaps some desperate deed, and in that desperation he entered and stole this money. It has been all my fault from first to last. How shall I answer to Heaven and to him for the sin I have done?"

"Don't cry," Longworth says, uneasily. He has all a man's nervous terror of a woman's tears, but he thinks better of Marie Durand in this hour than he has ever done before. "There is one thing I would like to say to you, if I may without paining you. It concerns Frank Dexter."

She shrinks at the name; pain and shame are in the face she averts from his searching eyes.

"It is this: Don't fool the poor boy any longer. You don't mean anything

by it, of course, but it may be a sort of death to him. It is amazing the amount of harm a coquette can do to a young fellow like Dexter, and without much meaning to hurt him either. Make him go; and to make him, I am afraid you must tell—"

"I have told him," she interrupts, in a stifled voice.

"So!" Longworth says, and looks at her keenly. He sees it all. Frank has proposed, been rejected, and told the cruel truth. "Poor boy!" he says, rather bitterly; "he trusted you so implicitly, thought you hardly lower than the angels—it is hard lines for him."

He thinks of that evening in the boat, when he had opened his heart to him in one of his boyish outbursts, and he hardens to this selfish beauty before him, crying "idle tears" for the wrong she cannot set right.

"They ought to hang coquettes!" he thinks, savagely. "Flirtation should be made a capital offence, punishable by a few years in State Prison. Poor Frank! poor Durand! poor Reine!—if misery loves company there are enough of us, and that 'queen lily and rose in one' at the bottom of it all."

As he goes, a boy rings Mrs Windsor's door-bell, and Catherine receives a note, which she takes to Miss Marie. She turns pale as she opens it. It is Frank Dexter's farewell.

"I have very little to say to you," he begins abruptly, "nothing that you are not accustomed to hear, very likely, and care very little. You tell me to forget you. I mean to try—it should not be hard to forget a woman without heart or conscience. You do not ask me to forgive you, and you do well—I will never do it. As to your secret, rest easy—it is quite safe. I leave here to-morrow; it will probably be a relief to you to know it; and in saying farewell, I also wish you and your husband all the happiness so well assorted a union cannot fail to bring.

"FRANK DEXTER."

While Marie in her own room is reaping the whirlwind she has sown, Mr. Longworth is on his way through the darkness to the house of Hester Harriot. He smokes as he goes—if he were ordered out for decapitation his last act would be to smoke on the scaffold. A cloud has rested between him and this friend of late, ever since Reine's departure. She had faced him upon his first call at