

declines, thinking as he does so that Frank is half right, and that he must be developing sundry tame-cattish proclivities to be so greatly in request.

Reine does not appear; but as he goes down the avenue he catches a glimpse of a gray dress and a red breast-knot ahead. She makes no attempt to avoid him, returns his formal salute, and passes on. And then at his feet, where she has stood a moment before, he sees that her other knot of crimson silk which she has worn in her hair. He stoops and picks it up, glances after her with the honest intention, no doubt, of following and restoring the dropped property, thinks better of it, puts it in his breast-pocket, and goes on.

"Another time," he thinks; "my intentions are virtuous, but my courage is weak. It would take more moral nerve than I possess to face that stately little refrigerator again just now."

He goes home and dines, lingers with the boarders for a time, and is "chuffed" about his very pronounced devotion of last night to Mrs. Windsor's heiress. Frank sits opposite, glowering darkly and sullenly and says nothing. Then Mr. Longworth saunters back to the office, and remains there hard at work until nearly eleven. The majority of the boarders have retired before he returns, but the porch is not quite deserted when he and O'Sullivan ascend the steps, for Mrs. Sheldon sits there alone, wearing the blue silk Longworth admired yesterday, and wrapped in a light summer shawl, apparently watching the stars shining on the bay.

"You Totty?" says Mr. Longworth, "and at this time of night? You will get your death of cold. What do you mean by sitting here and looking at the moon?"

"There is no moon to look at," Mrs. Sheldon answers, smilingly. She nods to Mr. O'Sullivan, who discreetly passes in at once. "I do not think I was looking at anything. I have been sitting here thinking of—you."

"That's friendly," says Longworth, in his calmest tone. "Nothing very unkind, I hope. Which of my failings were you grieving over as I came up?"

"Have you failings?" she says. "I suppose you have, but I never see them. I should be ungenerous indeed if I did."

They are getting on dangerous ground. They do drift on sundry shoals and quicksands occasionally in conversation, but it must be stated that the fault is not the gentleman's. He comes to his own rescue promptly now. Anything more prosaic than his remark, more unsentimental than his tone, cannot well be conceived.

"I don't know how it may be with you after last night," he says suppressing a yawn, "but I am consumedly sleepy. I got up and went to the office at eight, you know, and have been hard at it ever since. Better come in, Mrs. Sheldon; you'll catch cold to a dead certainty in this dew."

"Laurence!" she exclaims, petulantly, "I hate that name from you. Call me Totty always—no one does but you now, and I like it. Mamma says Laura."

"Well, if you like. It's not a very dignified appellation—"

"But I prefer it from you," she says, half under her breath; "it brings back the old times when we were both young. Oh, if they could only come all over again!"

"It would be a tremendous mistake, take my word for it. Old times should never be brought back. Let the dead die, and be buried decently and for ever out of sight and mind."

"Is there nothing, then, in the past you would wish brought back, Laurence?"

"Nothing," returns Longworth, promptly, "except, perhaps, a few absconding subscribers. But they are hopeless."

"I was thinking when you came up," she goes on, her voice hurried and tremulous, "of that time so long ago, when your uncle and my mother behaved so badly to us both—to you most of all. When I see you working so hard, and think of what you were, and of all you have lost for my sake, do you think—Laurence, do you think I can ever forget my folly or forgive my blindness?"

"I don't see why not. You did me no harm—pecuniarily at least. I never was a happier man in my life than since I have had to work for my living. Don't let the past trouble you on my account, my dear Laura, I beg."

His tone is cool—is sarcastic, almost,