

"Do not blame him," Reine says, wearily. "How can he help it? Everything is against me, and I can say nothing, do nothing. Yes, he believes me guilty, and you like him so well that I fear, I fear he will make you believe me guilty too."

"If he was an angel instead of a man, with his full share of man's blind selfishness, I would not believe one word against you. Believe! I would not listen! Have I not eyes—have I not judgment!—do I not know you well? I would stake my life on your goodness and truth, though all the gossips of Baymouth stood up with one mouth and condemned you! Oh! Little Queen, my friendship is worth more than that; one word from Longworth will not shake it. I see your ring is gone; can it be possible that all is at an end between you?"

"All! is the dreary echo.

"Since when has this been? Did it happen to-day?"

"The breaking of our engagement? Oh! no, a week ago, before he went away."

"And I knew nothing of it from either of you! Well! and what was it all about? Is Laurence Longworth going out of his senses?"

"Coming into his senses he might tell you. There is a Spanish proverb, 'A wise man changes his mind—a fool never.' Monsieur Longworth has simply shown himself a wise man, and changed his mind. Do not let us talk of it, madame. I am so weary and heart-sick of it all."

There is a heart sob in every word. Miss Hariott starts up.

"You shall not say one other word, you poor, famished child. Oh! what brutes, what blind, stupid idiots even the cleverest and best men can be! To think of Longworth's doubting you—"

"Supper, misses," says Candace, and Miss Hariott seizes her guest and leads her to the dining-room.

Reine is famished and does not know it until the fragrance of the coffee and waffles greets her. In the centre of the table the soft drop light burns; meats, sweetmeats, tea and coffee, cakes and pies, Candace's masterpieces, were spread in tempting array."

"Now," exclaims the hostess, "you

are to eat every morsel of this bit of steak, and these fried potatoes. Candace's fried potatoes are things to dream of. And you are to drink two cups of coffee, and by the time that is done you will be a living, breathing being once more. No breakfast, no dinner, no supper! Here, you shall have a toast—

Here's a health to all those that we love!

Here's a health to all those that love us!

Here's a health to all those that love them that love those that love them that love those that love us!"

A quaint laugh rewards the quotation. Hearts may break, but mouths must eat, and Reine really feels the need of food for the first time to day. Still her performance is eminently unsatisfactory to the giver of the feast, who frowns as she sees her most tempting dainties pushed aside almost untasted.

"A wilful girl must have her way way; but if you want to come off victorious in any struggle of life, the first ingredient is a good appetite. Reine, I wish you would remain with me. That big, uncanny house and the oppressive majesty of its mistress are killing you by inches. Stay with me to-night at least."

"I cannot, indeed. I am staying longer than I ought now. Will you pardon me if I say good night at once? I feel like a new being, strengthened and refreshed since I came here. You always do me good, I cannot say what I feel, but indeed I am most grateful."

"There can be no question of gratitude between those who love, dear child—it is more blessed to give than to receive in such cases. Will you indeed go?"

"I must. I have no choice in the matter. If I had I would stay—oh! how gladly—with you for ever."

She rises and resumes her hat and jacket. Miss Hariott stands silent, watching her wistfully. She goes with her, still silent, troubled, and perplexed, to the door. It is quite dark now, windless and warm, with the weight of coming rain in the air; How Reine, pauses, holds out both hands, and looks up into the face of her friend.

"What shall I say to you, dearest, truest, best friend, of all that is in my heart? I love you, I thank you, and even if in spite of yourself they make