

furnished with inherited claw-toed tables and straight-backed chairs to suit Miss Morrow's views, and indeed an antique disregard for comfort was in every line of the inhospitable seats. A few important pieces of old Dresden and two portraits by Sully in his rather thin manner, were all that there was to relieve the hardness of the furnishings; and yet the room had an air of distinction, and there was no lack of taste in curtain, carpet, or wall-paper. Several miniatures stood on the mantel. Its cool, gray marble and the brass fender and fire-dogs, aglow with the light of a hickory-wood fire, gave to the room a look of being in habitual use. Kitty looked about her with critical comment, disliking the old-fashioned furniture.

But nothing pleased or displeased her very long. As she rose at the sound of coming steps, a slightly built, rather small woman appeared in the doorway. She wore a simple gray linen gown and carried a basket of keys.

"Oh, you dear thing," cried Kitty, kissing her again and again.

The older woman submitted to Kitty's caresses with faint internal protest, and then, holding her off, said:

"How pretty you are, dear. Oh, if I were a man I should—"

"Marry me?"

"I do not know about that," said Mrs. Swanwick: "certainly I should make love to you. What a fine gown!"

"I have come for a good long talk," said Kitty.