

"What? And leave you?" I cried, astonished and heart-broken.

"No, sir, but go to the other side of the fence," she answered firmly, drying her eyes and recovering something of her usual calmness. "And more, if you love me as you say you do——"

I protested. "*If?*" I cried. "If! And what then—if I do?"

"You will learn to obey," she answered, coolly, yet with an archness that transported me anew. "I am not one of your boys."

For that word, I would have caught her in my arms again, but with a power that I presently came to know, and whereof that was the first exercise, she waved me back. "Go!" she said, masterfully. "For this time, go. Do you hear me?"

My boldness of a minute before, notwithstanding, I stood in awe of her, and was easily cowed; and I crossed the fence. When I was on my side, she came to the gap, and rewarded me by giving me her hand to kiss. "Understand me," she said. "You are to come to this side, sir, only when I give you leave."

"Oh," I cried. "Can you be so cruel?"

"Or not at all, if you prefer it," she continued, drily. "More, you must go in, now, or I shall be missed and beaten. You do not want that to happen, I suppose?"

"If that hag touches you again!" I cried, boiling with rage at the thought, "I will—I will——"

"What?" she said softly, and her fingers closed on mine, and sent a thrill to my heart.

"I will strangle her!" I cried.

She laughed, a little cruelly. "Fine words," she said.

"But I mean them!" I answered, passionately. And I swore it—I swore it; what will not a boy in love promise?

"Well," she answered, whispering and leaning forward until her breath fanned my cheek, and the intoxicating