

she ask you?" Marie breaks into one of her faint laughs. "You go on like the catechism, *Petite*. She asked me, she was good enough to say, because she had taken a great fancy to me, and thought my companionship would enhance the pleasure of her trip. Now, *Petite*, excuse me, we go at two, and it is half-past twelve already."

"Marie, I am not going to remonstrate—it is of no use. I am not going to talk of right or wrong—you do not care. But I will talk of prudence. I wonder you are not afraid."

Marie throws back her head with a gesture of disdain. "Of whom? Of what? I am not afraid. There are some nature's that can only be kept in subjection by letting them see we defy them. Let Leonce speak if he dares—he knows the penalty."

"Yes, he knows it well; we talked it over last night; and, Marie, there is that within him of which I am afraid. On his guard he may be while you are here—"

"Ah, yes, greatly on his guard," Marie interrupts, with scorn, "as he was on his guard last night, for example."

"Last night's excitement is not likely to occur again. I say he *may* be on his guard; but go, and with Frank Dexter's mother—to be joined later, no doubt, by the son—and I will not answer for the consequences. You know how utterly reckless he can be when he likes. I only say this—take care!"

"Thanks, *Petite*. I shall take excellent care, be very sure," says Marie, going on with her packing. "If Leonce is inclined to be unreasonable you must talk to him. I really require a change; I lose appetite and colour. His coming has worried me and made me nervous; it would be inhumanly selfish in him to object, but Leonce is selfish or nothing. I shall go, that is fixed as fate; so clear that overcast face, little croaker, and say no more about it."

The look of decision that sets sometimes the pretty mouth and chin of Marie Landelle sets and hardens it now. Reine looks at her for a moment, then resolutely closes her lips, and without a word quits the room.

Still the sisters part friends. In her art Reine loves Marie far too dearly

and deeply to let a shadow of anger or reproach mar even a brief farewell. She kisses her again and again with a strange, trembling passion of tenderness that is deepened and intensified by some nameless foreboding.

"I will do what I can," she says, "with Leonce. How much I shall miss you, oh! sister beloved. Take care, I entreat, and do not, do not fail to return at the end of the week. Let nothing tempt you to linger longer."

"Certainly not, dear *Petite*; why should I? Make Leonce go before I come back, if you can. It will be best for all. Tell him I will write to him, and forgive his coming when he is fairly gone."

So they part. Reine stands and watches the carriage out of sight, still with that dull foreboding in her mind of evil to come.

"Is she altogether heartless, I wonder?" she thinks, in spite of herself. "Nothing good will come of this journey, I feel that. And last night Leonce promised to go. Who is to tell what he will do now?"

But when, a few hours later, as she walks purposely in the direction of Mrs. Longworth's, and meets him, and tells him in rather a tremulous voice, he takes it very quietly. His dark face pales a little, and there is a quick flash at the sound of Mrs. Dexter's name. Beyond that no token of emotion.

"So," he says, "she is gone, and with Monsieur Dexter's mother. When does Monsieur Dexter propose joining them, for he is still here?"

"Not at all. How unkind you are, Leonce! as if Marie——"

He smiles.

"Marie can do no wrong—you and I know that, *Petite*. Did she leave no message for me?"

"None—except a message you will not care to hear."

"Still I will hear it."

"She bade me tell you, then, to leave Baymouth—you know why, and that when you are fairly gone she will correspond with you, and try to forgive you for having come."

"Ah! she will correspond with me and try to forgive me," repeats Durand and laughs. "That at least is kind; but Marie is an angel of kindness in all