

threshold of a playhouse door! No, no! My knowledge of my cousin is a memory only—a sweet and tender memory.” She smiled, as if at a pleasant reminiscence. “Then he was heir to Brandon Hall: a tall, brave youth, wanting but seven years to make a man of him, and I a child of ten. My mother had taken me with her for a visit to the Hall, and I—dear heaven, what a happy time it was! My cousin bore himself toward me as though I were a princess, not a beggar, and he the most devoted of courtiers. Not a day but had some special glory in it; not a night without its happy dreams. We walked and rode, he and I, through the long leafy lanes, and in the green dusk of bird-enchanted woods; we sang, we romped, we gathered flowers, and once when I fell and bruised my forehead on the earth, he—he took my face between his palms, and kissed me. Oh, I remember it all as if it were yesterday!”