

Reine, and the older sister fastens her arms about Reine's slim waist and goes.

"Now, then, Petite, what is it?" she demands, seating herself in the easiest chair; "what is the latest indictment? You look as if the jury had found a true bill. What have I done—for I see a sermon in your eyes. What a pity you can't inflict all your preaching on your pensioners, and leave poor me in peace."

"It is a sermon you have often heard, at least," answers Reine. "I wish you would let Frank Dexter alone."

Marie laughs.

"That poor Monsieur Frank! If he knew how often we discuss him he surely would be flattered. Have I not told you again and again that I do nothing, but I cannot help his falling in love with me. Other men do the same, and you find no fault."

"I have, I do, I always will," Reine cries, passionately. "Marie, Marie, this is worse than thoughtless. He was so kind, and I like him so much, and now he is miserable and must always be miserable. Oh! it is a shame, a shame!"

"*Mon Dieu!* Only hear her! Heartless! Miserable! One would think I was a monster! Shall I order him out of Madame Windsor's house? Shall I refuse to answer when he speaks? Shall I get a mask and wear it while he chooses to remain in this dreary town? I tell you I am not keeping him here—it is his yacht."

All this Marie says, lifting eyebrows and shoulders together, and making a very becoming and very French *moue*, but with the sweetest temper all the while.

"Listen, *chère Petite*," she goes on, caressingly. "It won't hurt Mr. Frank, this absorbing passion—he is only a boy. I am sorry to hurt him—I like him vastly—but the hurt will not last. Do not let us talk of him—let us talk of Mr. Longworth. How long he is in making up his mind!"

Reine sighs.

"It is all a muddle. Things are getting into a dreadful tangle, and I do not see daylight. Marie, I have had but one, but one letter from Léonce."

"Which goes to prove that Monsieur Léonce is probably amusing himself well wherever he is, and does not trouble himself too much about you.

But do not be anxious on that score. Next English mail will doubtless bring you another."

"Marie, if Monsieur Longworth asks you, how shall you say no?"

Marie looks at her, a smile in her soft, yellow-hazel eyes.

"*Chère Petite*, I shall wait until he does ask me. There are times when I am not at all sure that he will ever give me that trouble. There are times when—Come in!"

"Mrs. Windsor, miss," says Catherine, putting in her head, "is asking for you, miss. Mrs. Sheldon and Mr. Dexter have come, and missis's compliments to miss, and will you come down?"

"Hurry, Reine," Marie says, and goes.

But Reine does not hurry. She completes her toilet very leisurely, and then sits down by the open window. On the table before her lies a French prayer-book; in the prayer-book are some pictures. She takes out one, cherished with care, evidently. It is the photograph dropped on the grass several weeks ago, and picked up by Mr. Longworth. Long and tenderly she gazes at the pictured face.

"My dear one! my dear one!" she murmurs. "Oh! my Léonce, if the worst comes to the worst, how will it be with you!"

Another tap at the door. She replaces the picture hurriedly, rises, and opens. It is Catherine again.

"Miss Marie sent me, Miss Reine. She says they want you, and will you please come down at once?"

Reine goes. Sunset has faded out in primrose, and opal, and pearly gray; the stars are out, and the silvery summer moon is slowly rising. Some dozen are there, busily engaged in croquet, and Frank Dexter is by Marie's side. Mr. Longworth is there, but he is not so completely engrossed by the game as to be unable to observe how well pale corn-colour becomes young ladies with clear, dark complexions and "exquisite brown, blessed eyes," and how very perfect is the effect of one large, sweet-smelling crimson rose just over the left ear.

Reine joins the croquet party, and plays one or two games; but she is ab-