

acquainted with Jack—Jack Holly—my husband ; ” and Mrs. Holly looked up and smiled.

“ Jack was one of the best engineers on the road (and is now, too), and every one considered him an honest, likely young fellow. He thought the world of me, and we became engaged. But you know how girls are. The weakest of them can make a strong man tremble.”

“ A weak, white girl held all his heart-strings in her small, white hand,” I said.

“ Yes, and I dare say I often pulled Jack’s heart-strings rather hard ; but he was gentle and kind when I flirted with the country lads, and when I was wild and wayward he didn’t remonstrate. But one day there came along a city chap, who engaged board for the summer at a farm house in the neighbourhood.

“ This Clarence Devarges as he was called was handsome, well-dressed, and had that polished, indescribable air that is so fascinating to most silly girls. Jack was kind and well-mannered, but he didn’t have a bit of style about him, and style is what I doted on in those days so I snubbed Jack, and smiled on Mr. Devarges when he offered me his attentions. I flirted most dreadfully with him till even generous Jack was displeased.

“ One morning, looking somewhat grave and sad, he came into the ticket-office. The last passenger had gone, and the train was moving out. Jack’s train had stopped to take on freight.

“ ‘ Well, how long is this thing going to last ? ’ said Jack.

“ ‘ What thing ? ’ I snapped out.

“ ‘ Why, this affair with Devarges. I see it is going beyond a mere flirtation.’

“ ‘ Pray what of it ? ’

“ ‘ Only that I do not want my future wife’s name joined with that of a—’ Jack paused, then added, earnestly, ‘ Well, I warn you against this fellow. Who knows who he is ! ’

“ ‘ Mr. Devarges is a perfect gentleman, and that is more than I can say of some others ! ’ I said, hotly ; and then some demon prompted me to add, ‘ And, Mr. Holly, in regard to your future wife, I believe I do not aspire to that honour—and—there is your ring.’ I drew off the little golden band and handed it to him.

“ ‘ Nell, do you mean this ? ’ inquired Jack, with his white lips.

“ ‘ Yes, I do. I’m tired of your carping and criticising. This affair may as well be ended now and forever,’ pettishly.

“ ‘ So be it, then. Good-by,’ said Jack, and without another word left the room.

“ To tell the truth, I hadn’t meant half I said, and every minute expected that Jack would kiss me and we’d make up. But now he was gone forever. A mist came over my eyes as I watched the fast-disappearing

train, and I would have indulged in a good cry, but just then the ‘special’ came puffing up, and the president of the road came in. He was a kind old gentleman whom I had known since I was a wee girl.

“ ‘ Good-day Miss Nellie. Every thing prosperous, I hope. Will you do a favour for me ? ’

“ ‘ Certainly, sir, if I can.’

“ ‘ Well you see, when we were coming down, I met a man who owed me some money. Paid me six hundred dollars, and I don’t know what to do with it, as we are going up in the woods to see about laying out a new road. We shall be gone two days. Don’t wait to take the money with me—will you take charge of it while I’m gone ? ’

“ ‘ If you’ll trust me.

“ ‘ Bless my soul ! yes, of course. Here’s the money. Must hurry away. Good morning.’

“ ‘ Scarcely had portly Mr. Sayre trotted away, before Mr. Devarges came sauntering in.

“ ‘ Got quite a little sum there, haven’t you, Miss Nellie ? ’ eying the bills in my hand.

“ ‘ Yes,’ I replied, laughing. ‘ Mr. Sayre has made me his banker. Look ! Six hundred dollars ! How rich I should feel if it were mine.’

“ ‘ You deserve to have much more, and doubtless that pretty face’ll win it.’

“ ‘ Somehow his bold compliment failed to please me, and so it was with coldness that I said, ‘ Take a care, Mr. Devarges.’

“ ‘ No, I thank you, Miss Nellie. I have an appointment. But will you allow me to call on you this evening ? ’

“ ‘ Well, I scarcely think I shall be at home. You know mother and sister Lula are away, and a little while ago I got word from grandma saying that perhaps I had better come and stay all night with her.’

“ ‘ It was true that I had received such word from grandma, but I had no thought of accepting it. I had hoped that Jack would come and make up, and of course I didn’t care to have Mr. Devarges all at the same time.

“ ‘ What will you do with your money, Miss Nellie, carelessly inquired Mr. Devarges.

“ ‘ O, I shall put it right here in this drawer. No one knows about it, and it will be perfectly secure.’

“ ‘ Dare say ! Good morning,’ and with a courteous bow my admirer then left.

“ All that day I busied myself at my duties, and when night came I put on the dress that Jack liked best, and very anxiously waited for his coming.

“ ‘ Seven o’clock ! eight o’clock ! the last train has come and gone, and my duties for the day were over. I put out the light of the ticket office, went into the sitting-room, and sat and waited. Ten o’clock ! half past ten ! No use waiting any longer—he would not come.