

bury the past between them, she had spoken, spoken burning words of mingled passion and love.

For about a quarter of an hour he sat idly turning the ring in his hand, and then a smile flashed across his face, an easy, confident smile, telling that the man was going to settle this difficulty with the woman now and forever, as he himself pleased.

He left his room and walked along the hall to the stairway, where he stood and listened to the voices below. He thought he distinguished Clare's voice in the babble of the drawing-room, so he went down the stairs and waited again in the hall, looking into the drawing-room. Clare stood just under the chandelier, with her back to him, and many young people were grouped about the room, but none very near her. She was saying, evidently in answer to some one: "It is quite safe to stand under the misletoe now, for all the berries are gone, and with them the delightful privilege. By the way, the lady who gets the last berry is to be married first, you know. Who is the envied fair?"

Then Abbie blushed very red, and cried out: "That is a disputed point."

If Sherbrooke had felt any hesitation, that remark of Abbie's was most fortunate. He walked quickly into the drawing-room and half across it; he put one arm round Clare, stretched up the other, and plucked the last misletoe berry nestling close under one of the glass pendants; he bent his head and kissed the astonished Clare; he said, "The dispute is settled."

Then a shout of acquiescent laughter rang through the room, and under cover of that Clare protested: "You have no right."

But he was looking down at her, he had not taken his arm from about her; she forgot what she had said, she forgot her doubt of him, her fear for the future, she knew that she, Clare Holmes, had won what the Lady Alswitha won from the Ritter of Eberstein.

THE JOY OF GRIEF.

THE "silver lining of the cloud," the close connexion between joy and sorrow, the tendency in the thoughtful mind to tinge with melancholy even the most agreeable objects, and to derive enjoyment from the remembrance of vanished happiness—