

great and unnecessary rapidity to the junction where the chauffeur met him and took charge of it, while Morris and his mother proceeded to Cornwall by train.

The journey was made by Morris in a smoking carriage, with the considerate remark: "Do finish your doze in peace, mother. I want to smoke, and besides, I wouldn't disturb you for the world."

It may reasonably be conjectured that the annoyed Mrs. Severing did not follow this filial advice.

The ensuing days at Pensevern were pleasant neither to Nina nor to her son.

Morris played the piano stormily, and Nina, wincing perceptibly, said:

"Don't, Morris. It jars horribly to hear that banging. Your touch is not at all improved."

"The 'light trills and runs' of the eighties are altogether out of keeping with modern music, mother."

"Dear me, is that what you call modern music, my poor boy? I should simply call it strumming. But I suppose," said Nina with an annoying laugh, "that you like to call it *improvization*."

"Like!" said her son with gloomy scorn, unable to think of a better retort. "I don't suppose I shall ever like anything again."

He flung out of the room.

Most of his days might be said to be spent in this exercise, resorted to at ever shortening intervals, until finally the time came when he prefaced it by a definite statement:

"Mother, this is no good. I must go away."

"Very well, Morris. You know I'm used to being alone."

"Of course I know it is lonely for you in a way, especially since Mrs. Tregaskis has left Porthlew——"

"Very lonely," repeated Nina with a patient smile. "But I shall make some music, Morris, and read a good deal in the long evenings, and then there's the garden . . ."

Nina's acquaintance with the garden hardly extended beyond the kaleidoscope of herbaceous border outside the drawing-room windows, but she liked the idea of silently communing with Nature.