

for her to volunteer it? There is an explanation of some sort, of that he is certain. He cannot decide. He will wait, and let circumstances decide for him. He looks at his watch—quite time to be starting. He will go for her, and on their homeward drive—

His clouded face clears suddenly. He starts rapidly in the direction they have gone. He has an insuperable aversion to doubts and mysteries. There must be none between him and the woman he marries. She shall have no opinion in the matter; she must speak out on the way home. Friendly she may be with her aunt's stepson, but caresses, no; secrets no, all that must end at once and forever.

In the heart of Laurence Longworth there is generosity, manliness, and good fellowship in a more than ordinary degree; but blended with them there is a tolerably strong leaven of self-will, selfishness, obstinacy, and jealousy. As a man, men like him, as a friend, women may safely like and trust him; as a lover, he will surely be more or less a tyrant in direct ratio to the degree he loves. He is inclined to carry all before him with a high hand now. Reine must understand that, though her suitor, he is not and never means to be her slave. No one must come between him and his future wife; if it is her best friend in the world, then her best friend must be dropped.

If she has mistaken the man she has promised to marry, then there is no time like the present for setting the mistake right. She is thoroughly true, and pure, and good, that he feels; but all the world must see and acknowledge that truth, and purity, and goodness. Like Caesar's, Laurence Longworth's wife must be above reproach. His lips compress, his eyes kindle, his face is calm and decided.

"Yes," he says, "it must end in the beginning. All must be explained on the way home."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"SILENT AND TRUE."

THERE is a general movement among the people, as Mr. Longworth makes his way to the spot where he thinks to find Reine. Everyone is preparing to

go home. Frank Dexter, Miss Hariott, and Miss Landelle go together, and Frank in his turn is looking for the last named young lady.

Longworth passes him, and as he suspects, after a few minutes comes in sight of Reine and M. Durand. Marie is also with them. The place where they stand is secluded and silent, and as he draws near he hears distinctly some emphatic words. Miss Landelle is the speaker; she possesses in an eminent degree—indeed both sisters do—that "excellent thing in woman" a low, sweet voice, which comes clear from the chest, and has a peculiar distinctness in its lower accent. The flash of sunset light is full on her face, and he can see the cold, pale, intense anger that makes it like marble—anger all the more intense, perhaps, for its perfect outward repression.

"Reine may do as she pleases," these are her chill words. "She has known you longer, and can forgive you more than I. The man who will deliberately, for his own selfish gratification, break his plighted word is a man so utterly contemptible and despicable that he is beneath even scorn. And for anything you will gain by coming, you might as well have stayed for ever. Either in public or in private I absolutely refuse to——"

She pauses, for Longworth, pursuing his way steadily over the grass, stands before them at the moment. One keen glance takes in the three faces; the white, cold anger of the elder sister, the flushed and downcast face of the younger, with tear traces still on the cheeks, the darkly handsome, half-sullen, half-impassioned countenance of the young man standing almost like a culprit before them.

"Well, Reine," Mr. Longworth begins, lifting his hat, "if I don't interrupt you, and you are quite ready——"

She turns to him as he fancies almost with an air of relief, and places her hand on his arm. Marie's face changes instantaneously as she turns brightly to him.

"If it is time for Reine's departure it must also be time for mine. Miss Hariott and I were to return as we came, with——"

"I met Dexter just now looking for