

you felt. Still, this sort of thing brights itself in time, if let alone, and everything was beginning to go on as I wished, when, lo! this young Durand comes on the carpet and spoils all."

"How?" asks Reine, defiantly. "Mon-sieur Durand has nothing to do with it. Is he not my brother?"

"I don't believe in that sort of brother," retorts Miss Hariott, cynically, "unless they are fifty and hump-backed. Leonce Durand has one of the most beautiful faces man ever wore. Your regard for him is plain for all the world to see, and Laurence is only man, and very mortal, my dear, and he is jealous, and everything is going wrong."

"He has no right to be jealous," Reine flashes out. "I have told him what Leonce and I are to each other. He has no right to think of me as he does."

"My dear, right has nothing to do with it. When love begins to weigh things, and balance the right and the wrong, it ceases to be love. It is the most supremely unwise and unreasoning passion on earth. It makes the wise man a madman, the miser a spendthrift, the *savant* a simpleton. He is jealous unreasonably, if you like; so is Frank Dexter with still less reason, and until Durand goes, so both will remain. Take my advice, Reine, and send your French little brother away."

"No!" cries Reine. "I am not my brother's keeper. He shall stay as long as he pleases. With Mr. Longworth's doubts and fears and fancies I have nothing to do. If he chosés to suspect me unjustly, let him. I will not lift a finger to set him right."

"Reine, take care! You will regret this."

"Very likely: I regret many things."

"You do not know him as I do. He will bear until he thinks endurance ceases to be a virtue, and then——"

"Well, madam, and then——"

The dark head lifts haughtily.

"All will end between you, and you will be the one to suffer most. It is always the woman that suffers most."

"Do you suppose Mr. Longworth could suffer for the loss or gain of any woman?" the girl says scornfully. "If so, do him justice—he is quite above any such weakness. For the rest, I say, and

say again, if he chosés to suspect me unjustly, let him. I will not try to set him right. If he cannot trust me, then the sooner he gives me up the better."

"Wilful!" says Miss Hariott, shaking her head; "headstrong both of you and proud as Lucifer. You are well matched—either of you would die before you would yield an inch."

"I have nothing to yield. I do not suspect him. I am not jealous."

"My little Norman girl, we weaker vessels must yield or break. If I did not like you and Laurence both so well, I would wash my hands off your antemrimonial squabbles, like a sensible maiden lady, who has had the wisdom to steer clear of them herself; but I do like you, and cannot give you up, that is the truth. Here we are—come in and stay the evening. Larry shall take you home."

Reine remains willingly enough, and they peruse "The Rivals," and take tea together in the pretty room, with the evening sunshine glinting on the china and the flowers in the centre of the table. Later Longworth comes, and Reine sings for them, while they sit as usual in the twilight and talk. The moments are charmed; ten comes far too soon, and Reine looks round the pleasant room with regret as she rises to go.

"What a pretty house this is?" she says, "I wish I lived with you, Miss Hariott, and we could grow old gracefully together, drinking tea, reading books, singing songs."

"Mr. Longworth," says Miss Hariott, "what do you think of the programme? Are you willing? Because nothing would please me better, and I would guard Petite like a fiery dragon from the Scylla and Charybdis of man and matrimony. What do you say?"

Longworth laughs.

"Nothing to you. I shall endeavour to change mademoiselle's opinions on the way home. I promise to provide her with tea *ad nauseum*, books and songs *ad libitum* if she will consent to live with me instead of you."

"When?"

"Ah! when? Who knows? The when is for Reine. In the vague and indefinite future. But don't you go and poison her mind with your baleful antemrimonial doctrines, confirmed vestal