

enjoy upon such occasions. It was that Mr. Raymond had written to a friend of hers that he had to come east some time during the winter anyway, and might just as well come in time for the ball; in fact, that he had decided to do so, and was coming.

"And you'll be just delighted to see him again, wont you dear?" her friend had affectionally added, and Maud had said it would be just lovely, and then had tried all the afternoon to find some excuse for not going, but without success as mamma could not be persuaded. So here she sits thinking it over again, with her pretty white brow all drawn and wrinkled in a frown.

"How provoking!" she exclaimed petulantly to herself. She snapped her fan shut with a quick little snap that was positively quite vicious in its way, though the poor little fan, to tell the truth, was the most innocent of all fans, and without any evil design whatever, except perhaps a delicately painted cupid that ornamented its face.

How very inopportune it would be, she soliloquised mentally, if Hal Raymond should really be there that evening, and that too when everything was going on so nicely. When even her mamma had admitted that Mr. Merton's offer of settlement was more than ample, and had added with unconcealed satisfaction that she thought the spring would be a very good time for a wedding. Yes everybody knew what a good catch Mr. Merton was, and now just in the midst of it all, that Hal Raymond should turn up of all people in the world, and that too just to annoy her; it was too bad. It was indeed just too provoking for anything. But then perhaps he wouldn't come after all. He wasn't fond of dancing, in fact, if the truth were told, he positively disliked it. She herself had heard him say so many a time, but then of course that was a year ago, and a great many changes can and do take place in a year. Ah yes! a great many changes. Her mind ran quickly back over the year that was gone since that eventful coming-out party of hers. The frown slowly disappeared as she remembered all the pleasure crowded into that one short year, with its continuous round of dances, operas, tennis parties, and then the two weeks down the St. Lawrence, and the two in Muskoka. What a delightfully gay year it had all been, and then the end of it! Ah the end! that was

the best of it all, for was she not engaged to one of the most eligible, that is one of the wealthiest, and most aristocratic young men in all her set? And Hal Raymond, what of him? But now the pretty brow clouds over again, and the fan remains resolutely closed. He had really dared to kiss her, and she, Maud Laura Ashley, had allowed him to do it. She flushed a little at the very thought of it, and the frown deepened. But then that was all a year ago, and she was only a mere girl then. Yes, a year ago, and before she had learned how imprudent it is for a young girl of position, who has a right to expect a good match, and who has a mamma and one or two aunts who have also a right to expect it for her, a young girl who in short is pretty, vivacious, of one of the very first families, and is delightfully pedestaled, as it were, how excessively imprudent it is for such a young girl to be very much in the company of a young man like Halford Raymond. And yet, as she lingered for a moment on these old girlhood days, and saw the dark eyes looking straight into hers, and heard those deep passionate words that stirred a strange echo even now at the thought of them, there was a pensive wistful look in the pretty blue eyes, and as she beat her fan slowly against her fingers her thoughts wandered far, very far away from the scene before her with its noisy chatter of voices, and low rustle of silks and laces.

Again it was summer, and she was on the yellow dusty road that winds out of the town, and over the hill past the old mill. At the turn of the road just beyond the toll-gate is a little mound of soft green grass, cool beneath the shade of a wide spreading maple, and it was here Maud knew she would find him. It was a hot dusty walk, but what cared Maud for the heat; wasn't it enough that Hal was there? But would he be there? Would the water stop running at the old mill, or the wheel cease to turn while it ran? And now she gave a little feminine touch to her hat to right it a bit, for she was at the last turn in the road, and in a moment more he would be in sight; then suddenly with a laugh she stopped up short, for he was standing there blocking the road in front of her. In an instant he had seized her in his arms, and kissed her.

"Oh Maud," he said, "I couldn't wait another minute, so I came down to see if you were ever coming. It seems 'an age I've been there waiting for you."