

A SKETCH OF A TEMPERAMENT

by their occupying two houses, when one would better suit their now constant companionship, and disembarass her of the objectionable chimneys. Moreover, by marrying Marcia, and establishing a parental relation with the young people, the rather delicate business of his making them a regular allowance would become a natural proceeding.

And so the zealous wishes of the neighbours to give a geometrical shape to their story were fulfilled almost in spite of the chief parties themselves. When he put the question to her distinctly, Marcia admitted that she had always regretted the imperious decision of her youth; and she made no ado about accepting him.

'I have no love to give, you know, Marcia,' he said. 'But such friendship as I am capable of is yours till the end.'

'It is nearly the same with me—perhaps not quite. But, like the other people, I have somehow felt, and you will understand why, that I ought to be your wife before I die.'

It chanced that a day or two before the ceremony, which was fixed to take place very shortly after the foregoing conversation, Marcia's rheumatism suddenly became acute. The attack promised, however, to be only temporary, owing to some accidental exposure of herself in making