

went out from the Stone House—a house from which many dead men had gone. They laid in the earth the last of all the Windsors, and a monument that was a marvel of beauty, and sculpture, and cost, was erected over him. Then the Stone House was shut up, and for six long years Mrs. Windsor saw it no more.

A stern and resolute woman this Mrs. Windsor—a proud and bitterly rebellious one. Once in her hearing that well-meaning clergyman had said—

“It is one of the mysterious dispensations of Providence. She made a god of her son, and a jealous God has taken him.”

From that moment, in her fierce vindictiveness, she arrayed herself against the awful Arbitrer of life and death, and never until the day of her own death crossed the threshold of a church again.

George Windsor had been dead some fifteen years when Laurence Longworth first came to Baymouth, bought out the *Phoenix*, going rapidly to the dogs in the hands of its then proprietor, and established himself as a permanent fixture in the town. Mrs. Windsor had long been back and resumed her old life, how unspeakably lonely and desolate a life no one knew. She would have died in her relentless pride sooner than let any living soul see that broken and bleeding heart of hers. There are some things that not even time can help—this was one. But outwardly there was little change. She even went into society more than of old, and opened her house more frequently to her friends. And it was at one of these reunions—a dinner party given by a magnate of the town—that she and Longworth first met. As she sat in the drawing-room after dinner, listlessly allowing herself to be entertained, she overheard the words of two men behind her.

“So that’s the man of the *Phoenix*. H’m! good head and frontal development. Looks as if he might know how. Doesn’t he look like some one I’ve seen before?”

“He looks like poor George Windsor. You remember young Windsor, don’t you—drowned some dozen years ago? The mother, fine-looking, stern-looking lady in black velvet, here this evening. He resembles George sufficiently to be a long lost brother.”

The men moved away, and Mrs. Windsor, with a feeling as if a knife had pierced her, looks for the first time intently at the tall, fair-haired young man leaning lightly against the chimney-piece, and earnestly conversing with a little group of men. Her face paled, her eyes dilated, her lips parted, her breath came quick. He was like George—so like that the mother’s heart thrilled and trembled within her. It was one of those accidental resemblances that startle all at times, and yet she could hardly have defined where it lay. The shades of hair, eyes, and skin were the same. The figure of this young man was tall and strong as George’s had been; even a subtle trick of smile and glance that her boy had had this stranger possessed.

It troubled her at first. Gradually, as they met oftener, it comforted her, and at last, after years of acquaintance-ship, Laurence Longworth took the place in her childless widowed heart that she would once have thought it sacrilege to fill. People began to observe her marked partiality for the young editor, and to smile and opine that his fortune was made. Miles O’Sullivan one day, not long before this night upon which Longworth stands waiting for admittance before the Stone House, put the general opinion into words.

“Upon me conscience, Larry, ’tis better to be born lucky than rich. Here’s the widow Windsor, long life to her, ready to lave you everything she’s worth in the world if ye only behave yourself, and a mighty pretty penny it must be.”

“I wouldn’t take it,” replied Longworth, coolly.

“Ye wouldn’t, wouldn’t ye? And why, if it’s pleasing to ye?”

“Mrs. Windsor has her natural heirs—her daughter and her daughter’s children!”

“Mighty unnatural ones, if all I hear be true. Sure, the daughter ran away with a Frinchman, and has been disowned this many a day!”

“That is nothing to me. I would not accept Mrs. Windsor’s money while they are alive to claim it.”

Oh, then, by this and that, I wish a widow woman, or any other woman, would offer me a fortune. It’s twice—