

Mrs. Dexter descends, and Mr. Dexter clears from his manly brow the traces of moody thought, and escorts her to within a short distance of the Stone House. He lets her enter alone; it is his diplomatic desire not to appear in the matter at all.

"Don't make your call too long, mother," he says, at parting: "I will hang around here until you come."

Mrs. Dexter promises of course, but the call is nearly an hour for all that, and Frank is fuming with repressed impatience before she comes.

"Well?" he says feverishly, the instant she appears.

"Well dear," answers smiling Mrs. Dexter, "it is all right. Mrs. Windsor objected a little at first at the shortness of the notice, but she has agreed to let her go."

Her son's face grows radiant once more.

"Ah! I knew your eloquence would move a heart of flint, little mother. And Marie—Miss Landelle—what did she say?"

"Miss Landelle is a very quiet young lady, dear. She never says much; but she smiled and looked pleased, and said she would like to visit Boston very much, if grandmamma was perfectly willing. So it is all settled, my dear boy, and I expect to enjoy my trip ever so much more with so charming a companion."

"Yes, that is a matter of course. Did—did any one speak of me?"

"Mrs. Windsor asked if you were to be of the party, and I said, oh, dear, no! you weren't coming with me—you had to stay and get your yacht launched. I never made the least allusion to your following to-morrow, Frank," says his mother with a diplomatic smile, and her head very much on one side, like an artful little canary. "I daresay Miss Marie will not like Boston any the less for your being the one to show it to her."

It is quite evident that, as far as his mother goes, Frank's course of love is likely to run smooth. No one in the world is quite good enough for her boy, of course, but Mrs. Windsor's granddaughter approaches as near her ideal as it is in young lady nature to come. She is a great beauty, she will be a great heiress, her manners are simply perfection—even old uncle Longworth

can find no flaw here. And uncle Longworth has been heard to say he wished the boy would marry, and bring a wife home before he died.

Reine is not at home during Mrs. Dexter's call, and when she comes home an hour or so later is surprised to find Marie and Catherine busily engaged in packing a trunk. She pauses in the doorway to gaze and wonder.

"Why are you doing this, Marie? What are you about with that trunk? Where are you going?"

"I do not think I will mind that pink silk, Catherine. I am not likely to need it. Oh! is it you, Petite—what did you say? Yes, I am packing. I think that will do, Catherine; you may go, and thanks, very much."

The woman departs, and Marie, on her knees, rests her arms on her trunk and looks at her sister.

"Come in and shut the door, Petite. I am going away for a week, and oh! little sister, how glad I am for even that reprieve. Since Leouce came my life has been miserable. To get away even for a few days is happiness unspeakable."

Reine stands looking at her without a word, her dark, solemn eyes seeming darker and more solemn even than usual.

"Why stand there silent?" Marie goes on, in a low, concentrated tone. "Why do you not begin? Why not tell me it is not right, that it is my duty to stay, and so on? Why do you stand there and look at me like a sphinx? Why do you not speak?"

"I have nothing to say. What does it matter whether I speak or am silent? You will do as you please. Where are you going?"

"To Boston."

"With whom?"

"Mrs. Dexter."

And as Marie speaks the name her lovely upraised eyes flash defiance. Reine's lip curls.

"Soit! And with her son, of course?"

"There is no of course. No, we go alone; Mr. Frank remains to look after his yacht."

"When did Madame Dexter ask you?"

"This morning—an hour ago."

"Why did she ask you?"

"When did she ask you—why did