

allowance for the natural error of perspective common to the condition of falling in love, she was not, perhaps, so very much mistaken in her innocent reckoning.

The wedding, it was arranged, was to come off shortly. Harry had private means besides his practice, and there was no need, therefore, for a long engagement. But, before the wedding, it was Harry's desire that his mother and sister should come to live at Melbury. He had not seen them for some three or four years; for Mrs. Prior had lived the greater part of her life in Canada, and Harry had been unable to visit them since leaving Oxford and taking seriously to his profession as a doctor. For some incomprehensible reason, however, Mrs. Prior seemed very unwilling to change her residence. Harry wrote to her eagerly by post after post, begging her not to disappoint him in this matter; but his mother, who was always of a timid shrinking nature, seemed anxious not to face the stormy Atlantic in her old age, or to expose herself needlessly to a change of climate.

"You see, Bertha," he said, "my dear mother has lived in Canada now for more than twenty years, and I suppose she doesn't like to tear herself up by the roots, as it were, and come home again to settle in England; but as I can't possibly go out there, and as I long to have her living near us, I have begged and implored her, for my own sake and my sister's, to come to Melbury."

"She's a dear gentle-looking old lady," Bertha said, glancing at the photograph

that Harry handed her. "I'm sure I should love her, Harry, and I'm sure I should like her to be living near us. You're very like her too, though you're dark and she's fair: you have her mouth and her forehead exactly."

"Yes," Harry answered; "but my eyes and my profile, they say, are my father's. I can't remember him; he died when I was only a very little fellow, before my mother went to live in Canada. But my mother retains the most profound affection for him, though she can hardly ever be induced to speak of him to this day."

"But why did your mother go out to Canada?" Bertha asked.

"I hardly know. She said she could never bear her loneliness in England after my father's death. She went away, and buried herself in a little village in Canada, where she lived very quietly, though she's well off, and brought me up at a small school in the neighbourhood. Indeed, she seems to have a sort of horror of England. When I was getting to be a big boy, I felt such a desire to come home to school, and fit myself for a profession in a way that I couldn't have been fitted in Canada, that I begged her to bring me home to England, and let me go to Rugby or some other good place. But she wouldn't hear of it. After much solicitation she let me come by myself, but nothing on earth would induce her then to accompany me."

"How very odd," Bertha said. "Perhaps, Harry, she had some painful associations you don't know of in England."