

and heliotrope. The château was before them, the windows still reflecting the sunlight ; but this borrowed glitter was all the brightness it had. Once beautiful, the old battlemented house had an air of proud desolation, as if scorning pity, since it could no longer win admiration.

"You would have to spend thousands of pounds in restoring this old ruin if you should really buy it, Virginia," said Lady Gardiner.

"Well, wouldn't it be worth while to spend them?" asked the girl. "I certainly——" She stopped in the midst of her sentence, a bright flush springing to her face ; for turning a corner of the avenue which brought them close to the château, they came suddenly upon a young woman, dressed in black, who must have heard their last words.

Instantly George Trent had his hat in his hand, and before Virginia could speak he had dismounted and plunged into explanations. He begged pardon for the intrusion, and said that, as they had seen the announcement that the château was for sale, they had ventured to ride up in the hope of being allowed to see the house. As he spoke, in fairly good though rather