

glimpses of green woodland where the song of the sea steals slumberously, and the strong salt wind is mingled with the scent of wild roses. He gathers her some ferns, and makes them and the wild roses into a bouquet, and in doing it tears his hand with a spiky branch—a long tear from which the blood flows.

"Oh," Reine says, and turns pale.

"I don't want to stain my bouquet with blood—that would be an evil omen," he says. "Will you kindly wipe it off before it drops on the ferns?"

He draws out his handkerchief, and she obeys in all good faith; but Longworth's eyes are laughing as he watches her.

"'Tis not so deep as a well," he thinks, "nor so wide as a church door, but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. Thanks, mademoiselle. Now, if you will do me the favour to accept my very humble floral offering—"

She hesitates a moment, bites her lip, reddens, but accepts. They pass out of the sylvan twilight into the sunshine and the midst of the merry-makers.

"I hate him—I will hate him my whole life long!" Little Queen," he thinks, looking down at her, "rash promises are dangerous things—foolish to make and hard to keep. You shall forgive me yet for refusing to rob you of your fortune."

The day is a perfect day, the picnic an ideal picnic. The dinner is good, the champagne is iced, the knives and forks have not been forgotten, the jellies are jellies, not shapeless masses, the pies are not squash, the ham is firm and rosy. Insane beings who care for dancing with the thermometer at ninety in the shade dance; the same people who do not drift away in twos and threes, but mostly in twos, and nobody knows anything of the whereabouts of anybody else until the sun goes down like a wheel of fire, and purple and crimson and orange and opal pale away into primrose and drab. Then they drift together as they drift asunder, and there is a gipsy tea-drinking, which is merrier than all. Faces are flushed, noses are sunburned, the wind comes cool off the sea, and poundcake and tea are as the nectar of the gods.

"It has been a consumedly hot day,"

says Mr. Longworth, pushing the damp, fair hair off his forehead. "My lords and gentleman, you behold an utterly collapsed editor. Mrs. Windsor, I hope the thermometer has not been to many for you?"

"No, I like heat," Mrs. Windsor replies; "it agrees with me."

But she looks bored as she says it, and has registered a mental vow to be inveigled to picnics no more. Music and moonshine, picnics and pleasuring, beyond a certain age are mistakes.

Reine is beside her grandmother, but she has thrown away the roses and ferns—wild roses are not long-lived flowers. Marie reclines beside Mr. Longworth on the dry, wind-scented grass; she has been beside him all the afternoon in spite of every effort of Frank Dexter, and neither flush nor freckle, tan nor sunburn, spoil her pearl-fair skin.

They re-embark. The moon, rising slowly from over there in the west, comes all silvery and shining out of the water. It is a full moon. This picnic has been arranged with an eye to her quarters, and three quarters, and she leaves a trail of tremulous light behind her. The band is at it again. "A Starry Night for a Ramble" it plays, and the moon and the melody make the young people sentimental. They lean over the side and stare pensively at the former. Reine stands among the moon-gazers; but Marie, who does not care for moonlight effects except on the stage, is promenading slowly up and down, listening to, and smiling indulgently upon Mr. Frank Dexter.

"Come here, Laurence," says Mrs. Windsor, and he goes over and takes a seat beside her. "I do not think we have exchanged ten words all day. What did you do with yourself the whole of this afternoon?"

She smiles as she says it. She knows very well who his companion has been all the afternoon much better than she does who was his companion this morning.

"I had the honour of pointing out to Miss Landelle the various points of interest and attraction about the island," he answers. "I only regret in my character of cicerone they were not more numerous and more romantic."