

Sir Mortimer

and kissed, and presently the Countess spoke of letters which she must write. "Then," said the other, "I will go sit by the fountain until you wish for me."

"The fountain!" answered Mary Sidney. "Ah, Damaris! I would that thou mightst forget the fountain. I would that other blooms than red roses were planted there!"

"That would not I!" the other answered. "I love the fountain. And once a red rose meant to me—Paradise!"

"Then go thy ways, and gather thy roses," said the Countess fondly. "I would give thee Heaven an I could—so that thou stayed upon earth with thy fairing!"

The Countess sat herself down to write to Philip Sidney, not knowing that he was so near the frontier whence no living messenger, no warm and loving cry could ever draw him back. Damaris, a book in her hand, passed through the silent, darkened house out to the sunlit lawns. Her skirt swept the enamelled turf; she touched the tallest flowers as she passed, and they bloomed no worse for that light caress. Poetry was in her every motion, and she was too