

some and elegant foreigner is presented, and there is a flutter among the young ladies. He throws off the earnest and pleading look his face has worn, and is at ease at once with everyone, with all the debonair grace of a man well used to the society of women.

"A very unexpected addition," says a voice at Longworth's elbow, and Mrs. Sheldon approaches her cousin. "Who is this Monsieur Durand, Laurence?"

"Monsieur Durand is—Monsieur Durand, and a very good-looking young man, Totty."

"Good-looking! Well, yes, I should call him that. A delightful acquisition. I wonder if he has come to stay?"

"Could you not inquire? I saw him introduced to you."

"Miss Landelle looked annoyed. I thought," pursues Totty languidly. "She did not even shake hands with him. Reine, on the contrary, clings to his arm in a way that—really—There they are moving off together, I declare. Is he any relative do you know?"

"My dear child, do you think I stood up and demanded Monsieur Durand's biography the moment we met? Miss Landelle is here. Had you not better apply to her for his antecedents, since you appear so deeply interested?"

"Oh? I am not interested in *him*," answered Mrs. Sheldon, with emphasis on the personal pronoun. "I only thought—but it is no matter."

"You only thought what?" impatiently.

"That, being engaged to Mademoiselle Reine, you might—but its nonsense, of course. Only we know so little of these young ladies, and they seem to have led such odd, wandering sort of lives, and met so many people, and they tell so little of the past—but, of course, it is all nonsense."

"I think you must labour under some remarkable hallucination, Mrs. Sheldon," responds Longworth, coolly, "What do you mean by 'odd, wandering sort of lives?' Reine Landelle was brought up by her father's aunt in Rouen, and wandered nowhere except when she visited her parents in London, or visited Italy with her aunt for that lady's health. The young Durand is the deceased aunt's stepson—"

"Oh!" interjects Totty, innocently,

opening her light blue eyes, "her stepson? I thought you didn't know."

"I know that much. Mademoiselle Marie, not having been reared by her aunt, is as you may see, less intimate with him than her sister. Your tone and look are singularly suggestive, Totty. May I inquire of what?"

"Oh dear no—not at all! I really do not mean to suggest anything. Only I thought—but, of course, as I said before, that is all nonsense."

Longworth fairly turns upon her savagely.

"For heaven's sake, Laura, speak out!" he cries with a scowl. "If there is anything I hate it is innuendoes. You think what?"

"Laurence, please don't be angry," says Totty, plaintively. She lays one gloved hand on his arm, and looks pleadingly into his flushed and irritated face. "If I cared for your happiness less I might be more indifferent. What I think is that Reine Landelle seems to be afraid of this young man. It may be only fancy, but I certainly fancy it, and she is not one to be easily made afraid. Pardon me if I offend you in speaking of her. I know that she is everything to you, and I am nothing; but I cannot forget—"

Mrs. Sheldon is a pretty woman, and in her way not altogether a stupid woman, but she certainly lacks that delicate sixth sense, tact. A more inopportune moment for sentiment, for recalling the "past," she could not have chosen. An impatient "Pshaw" actually escapes Longworth's lips as he turns away.

"Confound the woman and her love-making!" is the savage thought that rises in his mind.

But she has planted her sting, and the poisoned barb rankles. She, too, has seen that glance of inexplicable terror in Reine's eyes, and all Baymouth will be talking of this man and this meeting by to-morrow, and making their own conjectures as to why Mdlle. Marie would not shake hands with him, and Mdlle. Reine looked afraid of him.

He turns away. Mrs. Sheldon's eyes emit one pale, angry gleam as they follow his moody face. Shall he demand imperiously an explanation on their way home, he is thinking or shall he wait