

was carried away by this sudden flood of enraptured resolution, of a resolve that seemed like an inspiration, of delight in the unreasonable, of gay defiance to the limits of the possible.

"Oh yes, you tiresome old Blent!" cried Cecily, shaking her fair hair towards the open window. "How could a girl think she was going to live on river scenes and bric-a-brac?" She laughed in airy scorn. "You must grow more amusing if I'm to come back to you!" she threatened.

River scenes and bric-a-brac! Mina was surprised that Blent did not on the instant punish the blasphemy by a revengeful earthquake or an overwhelming flood. Cecily caught her by the arm, a burlesque apprehension screwing her face up into a fastastically ugly mask.

"It was the Gainsborough in me!" she whispered; "Gainsboroughs can live on curios! But I can't, Mina, I can't. I'm a Tristram, not a Gainsborough. No more could Harry in the end, no more could Harry!"

Mina was panting; she had danced and she had wondered; she was on the tip of the excitement with which Cecily had infected her.

"But what are we going to do?" she cried in a last protest of common sense.

"Oh, I don't know, but something—something—something," was the not very common-sense answer she received.

It was not the moment for common sense. Mina scorned the thing and flung it from her. She would have none of it—she who stood between beautiful Addie there on the wall and laughing Cecily here in the window, feeling by a strange and welcome illusion that though there were two visible shapes, there was but one heart, one spirit in the two. Almost it seemed as though Addie had risen to life again, once more to charm and to defy the world. An inexplicable impulse made her exclaim:

"Were you like this before you came to Blent?"