

delay a day longer than is necessary. Thank you, Mr. Pettingall, for speaking out your mind so frankly. I have been blind not to see before that my mother wanted change."

From that moment Irene comes out of herself, and takes all necessary cares and arrangements on her own hands. She forgets her trouble—her haunting regret; her only wish is to see her mother's health restored.

"I have been selfish," she thinks, as she moves about from room to room, giving the final orders for their departure. "I have been so anxious to forget my own misery that I have dragged my poor mother out much more than is good for her—and this is the end of it. Oh! if I should have really upset her health—if this change should even prove too late! Good God! how shall I ever forgive myself—or him!"

She has not seen *him* since the interview he had with Mrs. St. John: she has gone out each evening feverishly expectant of his presence; longing, yet dreading, to encounter him: and she has dragged out the weary time with a heart of lead in her bosom, because he has never come—being, in point of fact, hundreds of miles away at his father's seat in Scotland, though no one tells her so.

"Afraid to meet me!" she has thought bitterly. "Yes, fear was about the last ingredient wanting in his cup of dishonor. How could I ever have been so mad as to think he loved me?"

The first place they try for change of air is Rochefort, in the Ardennes.

A lovely fertile valley, surrounded by heather-covered hills, the slopes of which are alive with wild blossoms, and the feet watered by clear streams, repose and peace seem to be the natural characteristics, the inevitable consequences, of a life in Rochefort.

But does peace come to the broken spirit more readily in quiet than in bustle? I doubt it.

What do we fly from, if not from memory? and can it come so closely to us in a crowd, where alien faces push between us and the semblance of the face we loved, and alien voices, clamoring for money or for interest, drown the sweet, false tones that poisoned our existence, as when we walk alone and weary on the footpath of life, too weary, it may be, even to have strength to push aside that which we dread to look on?

Irene finds it so. In London, amid the whirl and turmoil of the season, she thought that she was strong enough to bear all things, even the knowledge—the bitterest knowledge to a woman

—that she had given Eric Keir love in exchange for liking—fine gold for dross that tarnished at the first touch.

But here, in peaceful, slumbering Rochefort, she is fain to confess herself defeated. Here, where she can wander for miles without meeting a soul to break her solitude, his memory walks beside her like a haunting ghost from which she prays to be delivered.

Not mockingly nor coldly, not with a gesture or a look that can awake her pride, but as her heart remembers him—as it had hoped he *would be*, until her over-burdened spirit can bear the strain no longer, and sinks down upon the grass, dappled with flowers and murmuring with insects, and prays God she may die.

Only to rise, when her moan is over, burning with indignation against herself and him; hating herself, perhaps, even more than him, for having sunk so low as to regret him. Mrs. St. John knows nothing of all this; she is too feeble to walk beyond a short distance, and Irene never appears before her except in good spirits and with a beaming countenance.

The mother is deceived—she feels her own health is failing, but she believes in the restoration of her child. Irene reads her belief, and is satisfied.

Nevertheless, as soon as the weather will permit them, she persuades Mrs. St. John to move on to Brussels. She knows that, in order to keep up her *rôle*, she must be moving; one more month of Rochefort and the ghost of Eric Keir, and she should break down entirely.

Brussels is full and gay; the September *fêtes* are going on, and the town is crowded. Mrs. St. John and her daughter take up their abode at one of the principal hotels, and prepare to enjoy life to the uttermost.

Enjoy life to the uttermost! I wonder which of us ever believes that he or she has reached the "uttermost"—or, having reached it, how long we believe it to be such?

The "uttermost," if ever we attain it (how few do!) usually makes us so giddy, we are not aware, until we touch the bottom of the ladder again, how quickly we have descended.

Irene's uttermost at this juncture consists of running about to see all there is to be seen; and that is very soon brought to a close by Mrs. St. John's increasing weakness. She longs to accompany her daughter, but she cannot accomplish it, and the girl's solitary rambles through picture-galleries and museums begin only too soon to assume the same character as her walks