

when she gets there she does not yet know.

The night train leaves at seven; it is not much past five now. What will she do in the interval? Then she remembers she has promised to call and see Miss Hariott this evening, and she will keep her word. Surely Miss Hariott has not heard the vile news yet; she cannot, unless Longworth has gone and told her, and she does not think he is capable of doing that. Yes, she will see Miss Hariott once more for the last time. How very sorry she is to lose Miss Hariott's esteem, so good a woman, whose respect and affection are well worth having.

She shuts the door and walks slowly away. At the gates she pauses and looks back for a moment. The sombre Stone House seems to stare back at her. frowningly out of its many glimmering eyes, a scowl seems to darken its dull gray front. Oh, ill-omened home into which she had been forced—out of which she is driven, a criminal and an outcast. One great heart-wrung sob breaks from her, then she hurries away, homeless friendless, into the darkening night.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

REINE'S KNIGHT.

MISS HARIOTT sits alone over a book. She is an inveterate bookworm, and heavy or light literature according to her mood, is alike devoured and digested. Her book this evening is a novel, a new and popular one, well and spiritedly written, and the thoughtful interest of the story absorbs her. She lays it down at last with a musing face.

"I know what Longworth will say about this book—that, looked upon simply as a story to while away an idle hour, it is well told, and fulfils its mission that, looked upon as the teacher of any particular truth, it is a failure, and that he who reads will rise from its perusal neither sadder nor wiser than when he sat down. Well, why should he? The story is strictly moral, though it inculcate no especial moral, and my experience is, that the novelist who sets out to preach a sermon through the mouths of half a dozen fictitious characters spoils two good things—a sermon

and a story. In the main, story-writers seem to understand that their mission is as much to amuse as to instruct, to show us life as it is or might be, and for the rest say to us tacitly, as Virgil to Dante, 'Let us not talk of these things—let us look and pass on!'"

The little cottage parlour is, as it always is, cozy, homelike, warm, and bright. The shine of the fire glints on the picture-frames, sparkles on the keys of the open piano, and flashes on the pretty womanly knick-knacks scattered carelessly everywhere. She gets up, pushing aside books and workbasket, walks to the window, and looks out at the dark and gusty evening.

"I wonder if my Little Queen is coming?" she thinks. "She promised, and she invariably keeps her word—rare and precious quality in young ladyhood. Something is the matter with the child, something more than ordinarily serious, something more than the going of this young Frenchman. Can she and Larry have quarrelled? She cares more for him than she is willing to own even to herself, and he, perhaps, is exacting. Ah, I know she would not fail! Here she is?"

She hurries to the door and holds it open. Reine closes the gate and comes slowly up the path, carrying a large handbag, her face so pale, her step so lagging and weary, that Miss Hariott knits her brows in anxious perplexity.

"What on earth is the matter with the girl?" she thinks. "Has that Gorgon of a grandmother been nagging the life out of her, or is it only the departure of Durand?"

She takes Reine in her arms, and kisses her cordially, looking searchingly into her face.

"Oh, rare pale Margaret! You come gliding like a ghost out of the gloaming. How white, and cold, and wretched you look! Are you sick? Are you worried? What is it that troubles my Queen? Tell your fairy godmother."

But Reine only sinks in silence into a chair, and lays her head in a tired, spiritless way against the cushion.

"Are you in trouble, dear? I wish I could help you—I wish you could tell me. Is it your grandmother? Has she been annoying you?"