

III.

Meanwhile all was mirth and festivity at Monkswold. Entertainment followed entertainment in quick succession both at home and abroad. The whole county seemed eager to do honor to the bride. In the midst of all the love bestowed upon her she seemed to thrive like a hothouse flower; her natural reserve of manner was thrown aside and she won all hearts by her sweetness and made all alike happy by her graciousness and kindness of heart.

Cicely Fordsham and Kathleen were drawn, intuitively, towards each other and were becoming fast and dear friends. At times they strolled off together and in their long, girlish chats learned to know and appreciate each other much better than they could have done in spending long hours together over music or lawn tennis.

One bright morning Kathleen asked Cicely to walk down the oak avenue with her, as far as the Lodge. On her friend consenting she asked her to wait a few moments on the terrace, while she herself re-entered the house. Going to the housekeeper's room, she said:

"Hobson, I've come to ask a favor of you."

"Surely, ma'am," she answered, "any favor I could do you is granted before you ask it. But you'll honor me by sitting down a bit, please, ma'am," and the good soul fussed about and pulled up a fine fat armchair and a foot stool to match it.

Kathleen seated herself just to gratify the old body, and said: "I want to beg some goodies from you in a little bas-