

"I don't like to," said little Miss Della Coscia. "I don't think the words are pretty."

"Well, I do," rejoined Victor. "Papa says the English fought the Roosians and he says they beat them, too. Come, let's fight. You be Roosian and I'll be English." He started towards the little girl, who turned and fled, screaming at the top of her voice.

"Why, what's the matter, children?"

The speaker was Countess Mont d'Oro, who had been prevailed upon to visit England. She had resisted all entreaties until a picture had been sent her of her namesake, the little Marie. Then there had come to her heart a desire to see Vivienne's child, which she could not repress. The Earl had heard of her visit to Marie Lodge, and had insisted that Vandemar and his family, and the Countess, should pay them a visit at Noxton Hall.

Before the Countess could ascertain the reason for Marie's alarm, her loud cries had summoned Jack and Bertha, and Vandemar and Vivienne, to the terrace.

"What's the trouble, Victor?" asked his father.

"Nothing, only I wanted to play war, and Marie was Roosian and I was English, but when I showed fight she ran away and made lots of noise."

That evening after dinner Jack and Vandemar sat in the smoking room. As is often the custom with fond parents, who are good friends, they praised each other's children.

"I am prond of my namesake," said Vandemar; "he is a handsome, manly little fellow."

"And I think," said Jack, "that Marie, when she grows up, will be as beautiful as her mother. Who knows but that if my boy and your girl grow up together, she may, one day, be the Countess of Noxton?"

"Yes," said Vandemar, with feeling, "if their hearts so decide, and not our wills. Neither you nor I, Jack, will ever interfere with the love-making of our children."