

coming to Riverside—'would be there in a few days, Providence permitting. Do not commit suicide on my account,' she wrote, 'for I care as little as yourself to have our secret divulged, and unless I find that you are after other prey, I shall keep my own counsel.'

The letter dropped from his nerveless fingers—the objects in the room swam before his eyes, and like one on whom a crushing weight has fallen, he sat bewildered, until the voice of Rosamond aroused him, and fleeing to his chamber he locked the door, and then sat down to think. She was coming to Riverside, and wherefore? He did not wish for a reconciliation now—he would rather live there just as he was, with Rosamond.

'Nothing will escape her,' he said; 'those basilisk eyes will see everything—will ferret out of my love for that fair young girl. Oh, Heaven, is there no escape?'

He heard the voice of Anna Lawrie in the yard. She was coming for Rosamond's decision, and quick as thought he rang the bell, bidding the servant who appeared to send Miss Leyton to him.

'Rosamond,' he said, when she came to the door, 'I have changed my mind. You must go the Springs.'

'But I'd rather stay at home—I do not wish to go,' she said.

'I say you must. So tell Miss Lawrie you will,' he answered, and his eyes flashed almost savagely upon her.

Rosamond waited for no more. She had discovered the impediment to his marrying. It was hereditary insanity, and she had seen the first signs of it in him herself! Magnanimously resolving never to tell a human being, nor let him be chained if she could help it, however furious he might become, she went down to Miss Lawrie, telling her she would go.

One week from that day was fixed upon for their departure, and during that time Rosamond was too much absorbed in dresses and finery to pay much heed to Mr. Browning. Of one thing she was sure, though—he was crazy; for what else made him stalk up and down the gravel-walk, his head bent forward, and his hands behind him, as if intently thinking. Once, when she saw him thus, she longed to go out to him, to tell him she knew his secret, and that she would never leave him, however unmanageable he should become! But his manner toward her now was so strange that she dared not, and she was almost as glad as himself when at last the morning came for her to go.

'Promise me one thing,' he said, as they stood together a moment alone. 'Don't

write until you hear from me, and don't come home until I send for you.'

'And suppose the Lawries come, what then?' she asked, and he replied, 'No matter; stay until I write. Here are five hundred dollars in case of an emergency,' and he thrust a check into her hand. 'Stop,' he continued, as the carriage came round—'did you put your clothes away where no one can see them, or are you taking them all with you?'

'Why no, why should I?' she answered. 'Ain't I coming back?'

'Yes, yes—Heaven only knows,' he said. 'Oh, Rosamond, it may be I am parting with you forever, and at such a moment, is it a sin for you to kiss me? You asked to do so once. Will you do it now?'

'I will,' she replied, and she kissed, unhesitatingly, his quivering lips.

The Lawries were at the door—Mrs. Peters also—and forcing down his emotion, he bade her a calm good-bye. The carriage rolled away, but ere its occupants were six miles from Riverside, every article of dress which had belonged to Rosamond had disappeared from the room, which presented the appearance of an ordinary bed-chamber, and when Mrs. Peters, in great alarm, came to Mr. Browning, asking what he supposed had become of them, he answered quietly—'I have put them in my private closet and locked them up!'

CHAPTER VI.

MARIE PORTER.

The Hotels were crowded with visitors. Every apartment at—Hall, from basement to attic, was full, save two small rooms, eight by ten, so dingy and uncomfortable, that only in case of emergency were they offered to guests. These, from necessity, were taken by the Lawries, but for Rosamond there was scarcely found standing point, unless she were willing to share the apartment of a sickly lady, who had graciously consented to receive any genteel, well-bred person, who looked as though they would be quiet and not rummage her things more than once a day.

'She was a very high-bred woman,' the obsequious attendant said, 'and her room the best in the house; she would not remain much longer, and when she was gone the young lady could have it alone, or share it with her companions. It contained two beds, of course, besides a few nails for dresses.'

'Oh, do take it,' whispered the young Miss Lawrie, who was not yet thoroughly versed in the pleasure of a watering place,