

"Does not approve of cousins marrying," she thinks. "And it was only boy and girl folly, was it? How our view changes as we grow older! At least, it was folly that has cost Mr. Larry dear."

The younger matron looks puzzled.

"Something queer here!" she thinks.

"I wonder Mr. Longworth likes to stay." But she only bows, and says, "Oh, certainly not," and, as the charm of the stoop has departed with Mr. Longworth, goes in.

Meantime, Mr. Longworth pursues his way in his usual leisurely manner through various streets, until he comes to an iron railing and two tall, handsome iron gates. The place inclosed looks like a park in this pale light. It is extensive, and full of large trees.

He enters and goes up a gravel walk, broad and well-kept trees meeting overhead and making the darkness blackness. From this arcade he emerges into an open space, the grass close-clipped, and dotted with little beds of flowers.

A dark, large house looms up, with lights shining from its windows, and a glass arch over the hall doors. He glances at two windows to the right. Through these the lamplight shines, red and comfortable, through lace curtains, and seems to welcome him even before he enters. A large, old-fashioned brass knocker is on the door: he lifts this and knocks loudly.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF THE STONE HOUSE.

WHILE Mr. Longworth knocks and waits in the starlight to be admitted, a word may be said of this house and the lady who owns it.

It has a name and a history, and is perhaps the only house in Baymouth that has either. It is called the Stone House. Many years back there came over from England a man named William Windsor, a sturdy and thrifty yeoman, tolerably well to do at home, and resolute to make a fortune in the colonies. He chose New England, got a grant of land, built a log cabin, shot Indians, tilled the soil, and led a busy life of it. Time passed; the revolution began, and this Englishman shouldered his musket and took the side of the colonies against the king. The war ended,

and though Master William Windsor left a leg and one arm on the field of glory, he returned well satisfied, for another grant of land had been awarded him, and all about his dwelling for many and many a mile was his. Thinking it not well for man to be alone, even part of a man as he now was, he took unto himself a wife of the daughters of the land—a blooming Puritan maiden far away too patriotic to refuse a one-legged hero—reared a family, and in his old age saw the Stone House erected in all its strength and stateliness by his eldest son. Then he died and was gathered to his fathers, and years went on and Baymouth grew and prospered, and the Windsors with it, and they were the wealthiest and oldest family in all the town. Mills and Manufactories arose in their land, noble timber was cut down, and the Windsors need be farmers no more, but sit at home at ease and let their income flow in like a golden river. Nobody knew exactly how rich the last Henry Windsor was when he became master, butenormously, everybody said. He married a young lady of Boston, one of the fairest of all its fair daughters, proud and uplifted as a young queen, and brought her home to the Stone House.

Two children were borne, only two. Mrs. Windsor believed she was born to be a mother of sons, and was intensely disappointed to find the younger of these two only a girl. Girls being one of the evils of this life that cannot be cured and must be endured, the lady of the Stone House accepted her fate, but bitterly and under protest to the end. To her son she gave love loyally and liberally, and lavishly, without stint or measure; to her daughter, almost indifference. They grew up; the son went to Harvard, the daughter to a fashionable boarding-school in New York. Both had done credit to their name and their family, both were handsome; the son was clever, and though brains are a superfluity in the only son of a rich man, it still pleased his mother that he had them. George was nineteen, Mary seventeen, when the first blow fell.

It fell in the person of an extremely handsome young man, who arrived in Baymouth one day, and sought an inter-