

so much that is romantic lately that you have no eye left for our quieter home beauties ; yet I have heard you say, Mr. Arderne, that you admired the view from here and from the Priory."

"If you begin to call me Mr. Arderne I must learn to call you Miss Dorothy," he answered. "Before I went away we were Gilbert and Dorothy always. There are some home beauties I shall always admire,—yourself, for instance. By Jove! you have grown into a woman, Dorothy, and a lovely woman too. I can hardly believe you are the same with the little girl I used to call my sweetheart."

"Perhaps I am not the same," she said. "certainly I am not so easily flattered. You used to bribe me, I remember, with sweets when I was a little girl and you came back from Oxford,—bribe me to bring you books and things."

"With sweets and sometimes, I think, with kisses, Dorothy," he said, "such favors, I am sorry to have to allow, are now out of the question. For my part I am quite willing that, as the statesmen say, we should return to the old *status quo*. What do you say, is it a treaty?"

"You do not mean it," she cried, her eyes flashing, "you are only joking, playing with me, as you did with the little girl of three years ago. You think because you are a landlord, one of the county gentry, as they say, that the whole world is your toy, your plaything."

"Mean it? Of course I mean it, Dorothy. We will be precisely as we were before, sweethearts ever. It is a treaty, and except that this old tower is somewhat too public a place for such a ratification the agreement should be confirmed in the usual manner. Well, the kiss of peace stands over to our next meeting, the more so because I hear Mr. Summerford below in the belfry. Surely he cannot persuade my mother to mount the staircase?"

"Who is this Miss Varcoe?" asked Dorothy. "I do not like her. Eliza and she may become good friends ; they prob-

ably will, for my sister hinted just now that she thought her beautiful and good. Do you think her beautiful?" she asked abruptly.

Gilbert Arderne looked at Dorothy in amused surprise. Not the slightest suspicion of the true state of her mind occurred to him.

"Miss Varcoe is my mother's companion and friend," he answered. "Eliza will, I am sure, come to like her very much, and so I hope will Dorothy. Young ladies should not foster prejudices."

"Do you think her beautiful?" repeated Dorothy.

"Do I think her beauti—? Ha! here are the rector and the others," he said, going forward to help them on to the roof. "Upon my word, Mr. Summerford, your enthusiasm is wonderful ; I did not think it possible for you to tempt the ladies to brave that staircase. You must look to your headgear, all of you, for the breeze is smart up here."

And so it was that Dorothy's question went unanswered, at least for a time. Three or four months of quiet home life did Gilbert pass in such quiet walks as these, months unbroken even by a visit from Sir Guy Bodrugan, who perhaps, having learned his sister's secret, thought it better to keep aloof from one whose conduct had been so reprehensible. During this period a warm friendship grew up between Eliza Teulon and Amy Varcoe, a friendship by which the latter profited very much, for under the color of mutually pursuing kindred studies Amy's mind was unfolding and developing wonderfully, while her beauty and grace of person seemed enhanced from day to day. In her intercourse with Gilbert Arderne her demeanor was characterized by a quiet reserve that conveyed, as she desired it should, her sense of the difference between them in point of station, and Mrs. Arderne's mind was set at rest on the only subject that had given her some solicitude at first.