

denying it! You"—with a quick glance at his wife—"you don't regret her going, do you, dear?"

He spoke in an anxious tone that touched Lina and checked the merry laugh that was upon her lips.

"Not at all, Bertie," she assured him. "I do not like Mrs. Nevil, and I hate her friends and all connected with them. But you told me so constantly how much you admired her that I wanted to copy her as closely as possibly, so that you might admire me too."

She looked up at him with a bright smile as he protested eagerly—

"As if I did not admire you a thousand times more than a woman like that!" he cried. "You know it, and you are laughing at me!" He knelt down at his wife's feet, and, putting an arm around her, kissed her. "You are such a clever little woman," he whispered, "and you look so pretty—and so refined and gentle, that I am half inclined to tell you a secret." He glanced around the room, feigning a fear lest some one should overhear him, and then, putting his mouth close to her ear, said solemnly, "Mrs. Errington, I am more in love with you than ever!"

Twenty minutes later the husband and wife were turning over their invitations for that evening and debating as to which they should accept. One house they decided would be too crowded, another would be too tiring, and a third was too far off; and at last they came to the conclusion that, as they were quite alone, they would for once give each other a treat and enjoy themselves in their own fashion. So they both stayed at home.

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