

on the vasty deep to ask me this, Baby?"

"I did. And I want an answer. It's my right, and I demand it."

"Your right, dear boy? Don't seem to see it——"

"I love Marie Landelle," cries Frank with suppressed passion. "I mean to ask her to be my wife. Must I wait until she has refused you?"

"You think she will refuse me—when I ask?"

"I think so. I hope so. Sometimes I am sure of it. And then again——"

He breaks off, and clinches the oars, and pulls furiously for about five minutes. While the spurt lasts Mr. Longworth has to look after the rudder, and silence perforce reigns; but it ends, and Frank rests on his oars, and lets the boat drift.

"Larry," he says, in something like his old frank voice, "you used to be a good fellow; we usen't to be half bad friends. Come, speak up! You have been in love once yourself, and gave up a fortune for a woman's sake. You're not in love now, I'll swear, but you cannot have forgotten that time. You know how it is, and how I feel, and I want an honest answer as from man to man. Do you mean to ask Marie Landelle?"

There is a pause. Longworth looks with kindly eyes at the lad's flushed face and excited eyes. He has grown thin and rather haggard these last weeks, and the old boisterous, booming laugh no longer echoes through the halls of the hotel Longworth.

"My dear boy," he says, "of what use will it be even if I say no? You have a full dozen rivals."

"Burton, Morris, Graham, and others," Frank answers, excitedly. "I am not afraid of any of them. Longworth, I am afraid of you."

"Why of me? They are all richer men—younger men——"

"Pshaw! as if youth wore anything but a drawback; but that is not the question. You are backed by her grandmother's authority, and if you ask, she must accept you whether or no."

"A most humiliating suggestion. Besides, if she refuses me and accepts you, she may defy her grandmother.

Mrs. Francis Dexter can dispense with a dowry."

This is not the question—don't shuffle and evade, Longworth! Frank," cries passionately. "Will you or will you not ask Marie Landelle to marry you?"

"I will—not!"

"Not! You mean that, Larry?"

"I mean that, Baby, and I keep my word, as you know. Go in and win, and my blessing upon your virtuous endeavours."

"Shake hands on that!" exclaims Frank, leaning forward, his eyes gleaming with delight. "Dear old boy, what a trump you are! And, by George, what a load you've lifted off my mind."

They clasp hands, firm and fast, for a moment. Dexter's face is exultant, Longworth's kindly, but a trifle compassionate.

"So hard hit as that, dear boy? Take care, my Baby; it's not safe. It's not good policy even in a game of this sort to risk one's whole fortune on a single throw. If one wins one is certainly rich for life; but if one looses——"

"With you out of the race I fear nothing!" cries triumphant Frank.

"You think nothing remains then but a quiet walk over? Well, I don't want to croak, and I wish you good luck; but girls are kittle cattle, as the Scotch say. And she's a coquette, Frank, in a very subdued and high-bred way I own, but still a coquette; and where one of that profession is concerned, 'you can't most always sometimes tell.' Take care;"

"But, Larry, you must have observed that her manner to me is different from her manner to other men. She goes with me oftener, she seems to prefer—— Oh, hang it, a fellow can't tell, but you know what I mean. Would she encourage me only to throw me over?"

"Who knows?" Have you ever read the Widow Bedott?"

To say why gals act so and so

Or not would be presumin';

Mebbe to mean yes, and say no

Comes nateral to wimmin.

Mademoiselle Marie seems as clear as crystal, limpid as a sunny brook; but try to see the bottom, and mark if you don't find yourself baffled. The crystal depths obscure themselves all in a mo-