

knew the whole weary, stupid round,—Mr. May would pass the morning reading the papers either in the garden or on the sandy shore,—Mrs. May would give a few muddled and contradictory orders to the servants, who never obeyed them literally, but only as far as they could be conveniently carried out, and then would retire to write letters to friends or acquaintances; in the afternoon Mr. May would devote himself to golf, while his wife slept till tea-time,—then she would take a stroll in the garden, and perhaps—only perhaps—talk over a few household affairs with her daughter. Then came the “quarter to eight” dinner with desultory and somewhat wrangling conversation, after which Mrs. May slept again, and Mr. May played billiards, if he could find anyone to play with him,—if not, he practised “tricky” things alone with the cue. Neither of them ever thought that this sort of life was not conducive to cheerfulness so far as their daughter Diana was concerned,—indeed they never considered her at all. When she was young—ah yes, of course!—it was necessary to find such entertainment and society for her as might “show her off,”—but now, when she was no longer marriageable in the conventionally accepted sense of marriage, she was left to bear the brunt of fate as best she might, and learn to be contented with the plain feminine duty of keeping house for her parents. It must be stated that she did this “keeping house” business to perfection,—she controlled expenses without a taint of meanness, managed the servants, and made the whole commonplace affair of ordinary living run smoothly. But whatever she did, she never had a word of praise from either her father or mother,—they took her careful service as their right, and never seemed to realise that most of their comforts and conveniences were the result of her forethought and good sense. Certainly they did not trouble