

## CHAPTER III.

## WHO CAN ANALYZE A COQUETTE?

Cleo Ballard was a coquette; such an alluring, bright, sweet, dangerous coquette. She could not have counted her adorers, because they would have included every one who knew her. Such a gay, happy girl as she was; always looking about her for happiness, and finding it only in the admiration and adoration of her victims; for they *were* victims, after all, because, though they were generally willing to adore in the beginning, she nevertheless crushed their hopes in the end; for that is the nature of coquettes. Hers was a strange, paradoxical nature. She would put herself out, perhaps go miles out of her way, for the sake of a new adorer, one whose heart she knew she would storm, and then perhaps break. She would do this gayly, thoughtlessly, as unscrupulously and impetuously as she tore the little silk gloves from her hands because they came not off easily. And yet, in spite of this, it broke her heart (and, after all, she had a heart) to see the meanest, the most insignificant of creatures in pain or trouble. With a laugh she pulled the heart-strings till they ached with pain and pleasure commingled; but when the poor heart burst with the tension, then she would run shivering away, and hide herself, because so long as she