

splendid figure, sent a throb of fear to the girl's heart.

Before she could utter a word of apology, he advanced, and with a courteous, grave politeness, said :

"Miss Haltaine, I believe."

"Yes, Mr. Douglass," replied she, withdrawing her nervously proffered hand. "How is your cousin, please? Miss Douglass is anxious to know," asked Myrtle, feeling as if an iron hand were rapidly closing around her whole self.

"Better, thank you. I have just left him. He is sleeping," said Mr. Douglass, whose voice would have been rich and full, save for the marked constraint in every tone.

"I will tell Miss Douglass," and Myrtle turned, and when she reached the hall, fled fleetly away, as if her imprisoned spirit had just escaped from a power she could not define. After easing the sick lady's mind she went back to her own room, forgetful for the moment of Mr. Douglass; but when Rosalie knocked, and announced breakfast quietly, so as not to disturb the sleeping boy, all Myrtle's feeling of repulsion returned. "I hate that man,—I cannot tell why. But I won't let his will be stronger than mine; I will fight against it, and be afraid of nobody."

Curling her mouth with an irony one would scarcely dream dwelt in her gentle self, she threw a defiant little nod at her reflection in the mirror, and, after a finishing touch to her collar, tripped down the broad stairway with the mien of a young queen.

Mr. Douglass was reading the paper, but threw it aside on her entrance, and gravely as possible directed her to his aunt's accustomed seat behind the tray. Rosalie was in waiting, and despatched her duties with an alertness that was wonderful to behold. Her volatile tongue was subdued in the presence of the master. When she withdrew, Myrtle made an effort, and glanced over at her guardian. His eyes were on his

plate, and an unmistakable frown rested on his broad brow.

"What a bear!" mentally ejaculated Myrtle. "Wonder if I were to offer him sugar would he sweeten up." On the spur of the moment she bent slightly forward and said :

"Will you have some more sugar in your coffee?"

Her pretty girlish voice, breaking so suddenly on the stillness, made him look up to see a lurking mirth shining in her dark grey eyes, and a half comical quiver on the coral lips.

"Sugar? No. I'm sweet—it's sweet enough, thank you," he replied in a voice intended to be coldly polite, but which had an undeniable roll of thunder in it.

"How he growls!" thought Myrtle as she broke a Graham biscuit, and ate it as unconcernedly as if the bear were miles and miles away; nevertheless her anger was aroused. What had she done to be treated in this strange fashion? Nothing at all, Myrtle dear; but you are one of those detestable girls—and a lovely one, to make things worse.

When she was leaving the dining-room she turned and said,

"If there is anything I can do for your cousin, I wish I could help." Her voice died away in a little appeal; she felt so truly sorry for Tom's trouble. There she stood in the doorway in her clinging black wrapper, one hand on the door-knob, one playing nervously with her chain. A charming picture of a dainty young damsel, more fitted to grace a drawing-room and finger a piano, Philp thought, than to endure the toils of a sickroom. He forgot that sunbeams, little, glancing, brightening sunbeams, are often of infinitely more avail to sufferers than all the compounds of learned men of medical calibre; and that the soothing action of one skilled in tender nursing was better by far than the rough handling of untrained hirelings; so he thanked her dryly, and said that she would be *spared*