

skilful manœuvres to possess herself of the fatal secret he had kept from his father and her brother.

"Do you know?" said Harvey, "I regard you as one of the very finest fellows I ever met. Few grown men could have resisted such seductions as that dangerous woman has at her command, with equal firmness and prudence. But woman's wit alone is equal to cope with woman's wiles. In this game it must be diamond cut diamond. What say you to take Madeline into our confidence? Though young and giddy, she has a good head and a close tongue."

"With all my heart," cried Calvert; "nothing could be better."

Possessed of the main facts she, by a short narrative, subjected the youth to a rapid and searching cross-examination, and without his being aware of her drift, mercilessly unravelled the whole web of Marie's enchantments.

Then coiling herself up into a comical little heap of meditation, after the usual fashion of young maidens when retiring within themselves, she gave herself up to consideration of the case. At last, knitting her pretty brows, and biting her nails, she broke out:

"I don't like it. I can't understand it. Either she is Calvert's cousin, or she is not."

"His cousin, of course," said her brother.

"A queer sort of cousin, I should say. But if she is, she knows what she came over from France for; and she knows what the old gentleman meant in bringing her."

"Well, what, Maddie?" said Harvey.

"Marriage, of course," returned she.

"To marry the Colonel?" said her brother, mischievously.

"Now don't be provoking. To marry Calvert, of course!" This was said with a business air, inimitably funny.

"Phew!" whistled her brother, and then he burst into a laugh, whilst Calvert's face was dyed with blushes.

"I don't see anything to make a fuss about," said she with a pout. "He's the heir; and she's a lady in her own right, I have heard?" Here she looked inquiringly at Calvert, who murmured:

"Yes,—the Comtesse de Courtenay."

"Just so," and she nodded her head. "Nothing more proper, you see. But if she means marriage, she must be both heartless and a fool to side with any one in their nefarious schemes against