

'I believe,' he softly replied, 'that it must rest with you whether I am to be inconsolable or not——'

And then he came to an abrupt pause, for a high girlish voice was heard outside, and the next moment a slim young figure burst into the room.

'Why, Eloise,' exclaimed Beatrice, promptly moving towards the intruder. 'You have arrived a day earlier than we expected.'

Eloise laughed a shrill silvery laugh as she kissed Beatrice impulsively on either cheek. 'Yes, the Marksleys were coming straight from Newport to our own hotel, so I couldn't miss the opportunity of having them take care of me instead of that stupid old Mrs. Osgood——Oh, there you are, you poor Reginald' (running up to the invalid and seizing his hand in her own gloved clasp). 'I've felt so dreadfully for you ever since I heard of it. But you're ever so much better, aren't you? And you haven't lost flesh a bit; *has* he, Beatrice? You're just the same great big creature you used to be. A little bit paler, though, now I look well at you.'

Considerably paler, Miss Eloise might have thought, could she have compared Reginald's present appearance with what it had been just before her entrance. The bright blue eyes and the plump little face, rimmed with waves of yellowish hair, expressed a sort of funny superficial sympathy, as Miss Forbes seated herself on a section of the unoccupied lounge, still retaining the invalid's hand. And very probably she did not feel, through her intervening glove, how almost clammy cold that hand of Reginald's had now become.

Another week accomplished wonders for Reginald's sprained ankle. He was able, at its end, to dispense with the cane, and though still an imperfect walker, the evidence of his injury now decreased with daily rapidity. During this same week two letters had been exchanged between himself and his friend Wallace Wil-

lard, recently returned from a considerable stay in Europe. The result of this correspondence was Mr. Willard's appearance at the house of his old friend.

Quick of manner, slim and rather unnoticeable in figure, possessing a face that suggested almost a decade more than his real age of thirty-two, Wallace Willard rarely impressed at first sight. His features were of good regularity, but his somewhat lean visage nullified their effect, being of a slightly yellowish colouring. He had inherited at an early age a sufficient competence to permit the indulgence of that extraordinary American eccentricity usually defined as being 'without a business.' Many years of his life had been spent in travel, and these same years had proved productive of much valuable social experience. He was a man with no special predominating tendency, but with a liberal appreciative inclination toward all that was worthy of a cultured taste, and of an educated intellect originally well above the common. He recognized the shortcomings of humanity, as the unprejudiced observer and the thinker, wholly freed from inherited bigotries, wholly exempt from all distorting touches of dogma, may alone recognize them. Coated, to those who first met him, with a light film of what might almost resemble cynicism, he was promptly found, by all whom this deceptive over-dress did not repel, to wear beneath it a serious mailwork of reflective soundness and moral solidity. He had looked deeply enough into life to have discovered that what seem its baffling mysteries and entanglements are themselves a silent scorn of anything like sceptical approach; and while he was far from preserving any faith which might be called definite or positive, his respect for the very majesty of those insoluble problems constituting human existence, informed him with a calm and patient philosophic trust, full of lofty liberality and wise meditation.