

by the bye?" with an elaborate carelessness of manner and that sharp side glance of which Jeanne was becoming acutely conscious. "Does he come often?"

"He has only been twice before," said Jeanne, coldly.

She was vaguely offended by the meaning tone which Cecilia adopted in speaking of her kind Cousin Denis.

Oh, why had she asked Cecilia here? Why had she ever sought her out at all? Would it not have been wiser, remembering her as an odious little girl, to have shunned her altogether as a woman?

"Well, I warn you, I shall monopolise him when he comes upstairs, just as I did at dinner," said Cecilia, with an exasperating laugh. "If he wants to talk to *you*, you know, he can very easily outstay us. Joseph never stops up late if he can possibly help it."

The entrance of the Duke and Mr. Hogg-Watson came as a relief; and his wife's prophecy was fulfilled, for the Professor was immediately absorbed in the Dutch landscapes.

Cousin Denis went straight to the piano, and began to play, unasked.

He saw Jeanne's troubled brow, and his music presently charmed the shadows from her downcast pensive face; but he did not ask her to sing to-night; he played quietly on and on.

Nevertheless, he did not outstay Mr. and Mrs. Hogg-Watson, but rose from the piano at half-past ten, and bade Jeanne good night in a very kind and gentle tone.

Mrs. Hogg-Watson, on the tapestry settee, was yawning unrestrainedly. She cared neither for pictures nor for music, and thought it very rude of Jeanne to attend more earnestly to her cousin's playing than to her friend's whispered confidences.

"Of course she is doing her best to catch him; but I do not feel sure she will succeed, though he is evidently a dreadful prig," reflected Cecilia, as she shook hands warmly with the Duke and begged him to call upon her.

"Thank you very much. You are exceedingly kind," he