

hill. Téphany passed through a gate and approached a grove of walnut-trees which half concealed the house. To her left the ground sloped pleasantly towards the river. The quiet aloofness of the spot struck Téphany at once. Beneath the trees, ferns and moss and turf grew vividly green; here and there huge, grey, lichen-covered rocks gave to the grove character and a certain mystery. As a child Téphany had listened, open-eyed, to marrow-thrilling legends of mortals changed into monstrous boulders. Michael had had a score of such stories at his tongue's tip. Téphany glanced at the town below, at the river, at the moorland beyond; then she passed through an archway into a courtyard wherein was a stone wall. A farmer and his wife occupied the lower half of the house, and their little children were playing near the wall. Just inside the door, at the foot of a winding stone staircase, stood Michael.

"Mind your head," said he, not offering to shake hands, and leading the way upstairs.

"And you mind your manners," she retorted, trying to speak with the lightness of other days.

He pulled off his cap, shamefacedly, growling out apologies. Téphany laughed, for the spirit of the market-place still possessed her.

"I'm only joking, Michael."

"Here's where I live, Téphany."

He accented ironically the word "live." It might be assumed that elsewhere Michael existed in a merely vegetable way. Téphany looked about her with keen interest. The studio, of a pale grey in tone, with a ceiling slightly darker than the walls, was surprisingly large and well proportioned. An old oak dresser, with the date, 1624, carved on it, displayed some curious figures of Breton faïence, rudely modelled, coarsely painted, and yet informed with a simple, primitive grace and charm; upon the walls were innumerable charcoal sketches, names, scraps of verse, the memorials of previous tenants, some of them executed with amazing spirit and cleverness; in a corner,