

tend to help that along a little. Not that I intend to bring her here and say, 'Please, sir, go on now and make love to her.' Not by any manner of means; but just let him once get acquainted with May Merton, and he can't help it."

"May Merton! Why, I know her, Kate! John will never fancy her, I'm sure."

"You can't tell. Nobody ever knows what notion a man may take about marrying;" then suddenly, as if a new thought had struck her, she held up Franc's face in both her hands, and looking down into her eyes, said: "Do you love John, Franc Lester?"

Franc returned the look honestly and said, "No; I do not."

"Does he love you?"

"No; certainly not."

"I thought not. You see I don't mean to plot against anybody; but if you have been here six months, and have had all those long talks, and still are right where you began, it's time some one else was brought into the field. Next to you I had rather have May Merton; so I am going this very minute to write to her," and she vanished as she had come.

The picnic was to be on Thursday, and on Tuesday Miss Merton arrived. Before night, she and John were chatting as easily as if they had always been friends; and Kate thought her plan a success. Next evening, however, John seemed to be affected with low spirits, and lay on the sofa, his hand carefully shading his eyes; but a close observer would have seen that he was intently watching the fair young faces drawn closely together in the deep bay window at the other end of the room.

"Look, girls, what a lovely horse!" cried Kate, as a carriage dashed past. May sprang up, and ran directly into the arms of a gentleman who was entering the room. With a polite little scream, she extricated herself, and as soon as Kate could smother her laughter, she introduced Mr. Hugh McAlpine. Franc thought as she looked at him, that she had never seen a man's face so singularly beautiful. The features were delicately chiseled as a woman's, and the light of intellect shone in the restless eyes. Every motion was quick and nervous, and she thought, with

a foreboding, of what she had heard of him before. "Just the sort of man to fall under severe temptation," she thought.

When they were taking leave, Dr. McAlpine said, "Miss Kate, you were exclaiming at the beauty of a horse when we came in. I drive a better horse than that. Will that tempt you to ride over to the Grove with me to-morrow?"

"I am afraid I am not proof against such a temptation," she said with mock gravity.

The morning was beautifully clear, and in the best of spirits they started.

After dinner, when everybody was beginning to look tired, Mr. Lawrence sauntered up in his usual lazy fashion and said, "There's a gipsy tent over there in the woods. Any of you girls want your fortunes told?"

"I should think some of you men would," said Kate Earle; "you all have such curiosity."

Lawrence was coolly fanning himself with his hat, and took no notice of her remark; but Dr. McAlpine seemed nettled.

"I think I must ask you to make me an exception to the general rule, Kate," he said. "I certainly have no curiosity about my future. I believe man to be the architect of his own fortune."

It was decided that Kate should be the first to consult the oracle. She told her the old story, of a long and happy life—of the handsome lover who would come to take her across the sea—and of the good she would do in the world.

Dr. McAlpine came next. The gipsy said, "You are strong, but in the battle the strongest sometimes fail. Never nurse a viper; some day it may—nay, *will*, turn and sting you."

Just then, they heard Hugh's voice outside, repeating the text from which he had lately heard a temperance sermon:

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red. At the last, it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

Allan winced under the look in the blue eyes that met his, as he moved away to give Franc his place.

She took her hand, and with a quick look at the fair young face, she said, "Lady, you have had trouble—you will have more