

his own and all his presents had been sent to his agent. Furious, he went home as fast as he could, and there found the altered circumstances were Miss Alverton's expected fortune and engagement to some young man whose title and position the uncle considered a proper equivalent for his niece's beauty and his own wealth. Mrs. Alverton tried hard to prevent any interview; but Dick was determined, and at last managed to see the young lady, who simply told him that she had never cared for him, and had only been induced to tolerate him by her mother, winding up by showing plainly her delight at being rid of him. Such was my second heiress. Now what do you say to my dislike of rich women?"

Luckily for Maude, Gerald Foulis had walked on beside her, looking straight before him; otherwise the growing pallor and agitation of his companion would certainly have betrayed her. She suffered horribly, for in fact it was an episode in her own life Gerald had related, and truthfully enough. From not knowing some of the persons concerned however, he had failed to realize how far less blameworthy the poor girl was than the excited account of his friend had led him to believe. Neither knew how the daughter had been compromised by the artful scheming of Mrs. Alverton, who had led Captain Warburton on to an extent Maude would never have permitted.

The harsh view Gerald took of the affair hurt her terribly, and it was only with difficulty that she could steady herself. Gerald broke the silence after a minute or two, saying in a lighter tone—

"I beg your pardon for this long yarn; but Dick's story has been running in my head all day, and my heart aches whenever I think of him, poor old fellow—for he has never rightly got over the blow; and, though he'll probably live long and, I trust, see good days, there's a bit of the best part of life gone from him, and he will never be the same again. There—I am as bad as ever! But you have granted me so much license in the way of speaking my thoughts that I grow encroaching. Forgive me."

"Readily enough. Why, it is a pleasure to me to feel you care for my sympathy!"

"Care for it! Why, Miss Thornleigh—Maude, do you really not know how precious it is to me—when it is all the world to me? Look here! I'm not a clever fellow like Jack; I'm a very poor man too; I know I have nothing to win your love with; but, if loving you and you only could do it, faith, there

are few men could beat me, I think! It has been growing on me since the day I first saw your face at the window over the porch yonder, till now it has taken such hold of me that I hardly know how I shall live if you cannot care for me. Tell me, darling; will you give your self to me, or must I go away heart-broken and dejected?"

Maude, utterly taken aback at this sudden appeal, and still shaken by her recent agitation, could not speak; but, if her lips were silent, her eyes apparently were not, for the next minute she found herself clasped tightly in Gerald's arms, and kisses were showered upon her face ere she recovered strength and sense to release herself.

"Mr. Foulis—Gerald—you don't know me! This is utter madness!" she exclaimed.

"If it is, I infinitely prefer it to sanity," was the cool rejoinder; and Gerald again drew her to him, his eyes glowing with love and mischief. "Still I hardly see why it should be madness either. We shall be paupers, doubtless; but, as we agreed just now, that does not seem seriously to interfere with Jack and his wife's happiness. Besides, I can work, I know, any way."

With a start, some considerable time later, they bethought themselves of the time, and turned toward home. Their confusion was not diminished on their meeting Jack and his wife close to the garden-gate.

"So here you are!" said Jack, looking sharply at them. "The good wife chose to fancy you had fallen over the lin, or been stung to death by adders, and buried by the robbers, like the babes in the wood; and, as nothing would suit her ladyship but going off to discover the whereabouts of your mortal remains, I was in duty bound to accompany her."

They turned, and all went into the house, Maude at heart very thankful it was so close.

As soon as the two ladies had gone in, Gerald seized Jack's hand and shook it violently, exclaiming incoherently as to his gratitude to Jack and the fulness of his own happiness, till Jack suddenly caught him by the shoulders, pushed him down into a chair, and himself dropped into another, dryly remarking—

"Now, just calm yourself, young man, and try to tell me coherently what all this excitement is about. At present all I know is that I am a trump, that you are the happiest fellow alive; and that some third person is an angel—all three possibly true enough statements, but scarcely explanatory."

"It all came from that walk. You see, when I went off with Miss—with