

And yet she could not forget it ; absorb herself as she would in household cares, busy herself as she would with her father's requirements and the needs of her poorer neighbors—and for these Cynthia was a centre of all that was beneficent and beautiful—moments would come when the present seemed to her like a dream and the past the only reality. When had she lived so fully as when she knew from Hubert's lips the meaning of his love for her—of her love for him? Life would be dull and gray indeed if it contained no memory of those exquisite, passionate moments! For these, the rest of her existence was a mere setting ; and for these she knew well enough that she was glad that she had lived.

Thus she sat thinking, with her cheek upon her hand and the tears wet upon her long dark lashes ; and she did not hear the footsteps of any one approaching until her father touched her on the shoulder and said—

"Cynthia, here's visitors!"

Then she looked up. At first she saw only the ruddy face and reddish hair of the admirable MacPhail, and she rose to her feet with an impatient little sigh. After MacPhail came another neighbor—a tall thin man with a military bearing, generally known as "the Colonel," though it was not clear that he had ever held any rank in the army. And after these two a stranger followed—also a tall man, thin, dark, grave, with eyes that seemed to Cynthia like those of one who had returned from beyond the grave.

A start like a sort of electric shock ran through Cynthia's frame. It was impossible for her to speak, to do more than extend her hand in silence to each of the new-comers. And then she looked once more upon her lover's face—upon the face of Hubert Lepel. In the presence of her father and the two comparative strangers, she could not even utter a word of greeting. Her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth, and she dared not even raise her eyes.

Hubert seemed at first as tongue-tied as herself ; but presently she heard him talking in a quiet unobtrusive way, as if he and "the Colonel" were old friends ; and it transpired that the two had met during Hubert's previous wanderings in America, and that they had seen a good deal of the world together.

Before long, all four men were busily engaged on a com-