

did not care to discuss Dale with Renniker. When he had completed his sketch of affairs in that obscure republic, I thanked him politely and ordered coffee.

Feeling in a gregarious, companionable humour—I have had enough solitude at Murglebed to last me the rest of my short lifetime—I went later in the afternoon to Sussex Gardens to call on Mrs. Ellerton. It was her day at home, and the drawing-room was filled with chattering people. I stayed until most of them were gone, and then Maisie dragged me to the inner room, where a table was strewn with the wreckage of tea.

"I haven't had any," she said, grasping the teapot and pouring a treacly liquid into a cup. "You must have some more. Do you like it black, or with milk?"

She is a dainty slip of a girl, with deep grey eyes and wavy brown hair and a sea-shell complexion. I absently swallowed the abomination she handed me, for I was looking at her over the teacup and wondering how an exquisite-minded gentleman like Dale could forsake her for a Lola Brandt. It was not as if Maisie were an empty-headed, empty-natured little girl. She is a young person of sense, education, and character. She also adores musical comedy and a band at dinner: an excellent thing in woman—when she is very young.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" she asked.

"Because, my dear Maisie," said I, "you are good to look upon. You are also dropping a hairpin."

She hastily secured the dangling thing. "I did my hair anyhow to-day," she explained.

Again I thought of Dale's tie and socks. The signs of a lover's "careless desolation," described by Rosalind so minutely, can still be detected in modern youth of both sexes. I did not pursue the question, but alluded to autumn gaieties. She spoke of them without en-