

“Anything in the world but what you are.”

The tone was at once too sincere and too absent for a compliment. Cecily knew herself not to be plain; but he was referring to something else than that.

“In fact, I hardly thought of you as an individual at all. You were the Gainsboroughs.”

“And you didn’t like the Gainsboroughs?” she cried in a flash of intuition.

“No, I didn’t,” he admitted.

“Why not?”

“A prejudice,” answered Harry Tristram after a pause.

She crossed her legs, sticking one foot out in front of her and looking at it thoughtfully. He followed the movement and slowly broke into a smile; it was followed by an impatient shrug. With the feminine instinct she pushed her gown lower down, half over the foot. Harry laughed. She looked up, blushing and inclined to be angry,

“Oh, it wasn’t that,” he said, laughing again rather contemptuously. “But——” He rose, took some paces along the lawn, and then, coming back, stood beside her, staring at the Blent and frowning rather formidably.

“Did you see me when I first saw you by the Pool?” he asked in a moment.

“Yes. How you hurried after me!”

Another pause followed, Harry’s frown giving way to a smile, but a perplexed and reluctant one. Cecily watched him with puzzled interest—still sitting with her foot stuck out in front of her and her head resting on the bend of her arm: her eyes looked upwards, and her lips were just parted.

“Have I been staring at you?” he inquired abruptly.

“Well, yes, you have,” she answered, laughing. “But a strange cousin expects to be examined rather carefully. Do I pass muster among the Tristrams? Or am I all the hated Gainsborough?”

He looked at her again and earnestly. She met the