

come one day full of the news, and exclaimed, "I say, uncle, here's Mrs. Longworth, from Baymouth, and her daughter stopping at the Sheldons. It would only be handsome, sir, I think, to ask them here," the old man had bent his bushy gray brows and scowled.

"Tom Longworth's widow and her girl here! What are they after? Very bad taste on their part to come where I am, but I know that woman—a brazen, bold-faced hussy, and vicious enough for anything. Tom Longworth was a knave and a fool. No widow or daughter of his shall ever cross this threshold."

"But you have no right, sir, to visit the wrong doing of the father upon——"

"Bosh, Larry. How old is the girl?"

"Sixteen, sir, and one of the loveliest——"

"Of course, of course. Every bread-and-butter schoolgirl is an angel in the eyes of a soft-headed boy of twenty-two. What has her mother brought her down here for? Couldn't she barter her off up North? Or does she want to catch young Sheldon? He's next door to a fool, but his prospects are good, and I dare say Sarah Longworth will find it easier to inveigle a fool than a man endowed with the average amount of common sense. For you, Larry, my lad, I never interfere with your amusements, as you know—flirt with this little Longworth, or any one else, to your heart's content. There is a certain amount of calf love which young fellows of your stamp find it indispensable to get rid of somehow before they marry and settle; you may bestow a little of its superfluity on this girl, if you like; but when it comes to marrying, you shall please me as well as yourself. That will do. Reserve your eloquence for the future! when you go to represent your native State in Congress, you know—don't inflict it on me. You told me you were short of funds yesterday. Here's a cheque for current expenses. Go and enjoy yourself; but mind, my boy"—he lays his hand on the lad's square shoulders, and looks at him, half imperiously, half fondly—"nothing serious for two or three years yet."

Young Laurence, very erect, very resolute, very indignant, opens his lips to answer, is waved authoritatively down, takes his cheque, rides off to

town, and buys a pearl necklace for his fair, pale goddess. It is the only sort of offering he has discovered that can bring a sparkle of rapture to her eyes, a flush of joy to her cheeks. Flowers may have a language to him—to Miss Totty, peerless but practical, they speak not half so eloquently as pearls. It disappoints him a little; but girls are like that, he judges, fond of jewels, and laces, and pretty things. He is fond of them himself, in a way.

It is hardly necessary, perhaps, to record that long before this he "has told his love" in burning and eloquent words—not that burning eloquence was needed—and has been accepted.

CHAPTER XIII.

"THE GULF IS DEEP BUT STRAIGHT ENOUGH."

Mrs. Longworth is enchanted. Some ultimate design upon young William Sheldon has brought her here, it may be, but young Laurence Longworth is more than she could have hoped for. As the wife of James Longworth's heir, Totty's position and her own are secure for all time. But Mrs. Longworth must go home, and this pleasant idyl must come to an end. Laurence must speak to his uncle, says Mrs. Longworth; it would place her darling in a false position to take her away, engaged, without Mr. Longworth's sanction and blessing, and that she could never consent to.

Laurence goes home and speaks. He stands before his uncle in the rosy evening light, flushed, eager, handsome, pleading. He loves his cousin Laura to distraction; he can have neither life nor hope apart from her; she will be the inspiration, the good genius of his life. Will her uncle not forget and forgive the past, and take her to his heart as the daughter of his home?

James Longworth listens, growing purple with passion, and rises from his chair with a great oath. Accept her! the artful, manœuvring daughter of a brazen, sordid, match-making, money-hunting mother? Allow Tom Longworth's daughter to enter this house as its mistress? He would set fire to it with his own hand and burn it to the ground first. For Laurence, he is a fool—a love sick, sentimental, ridiculous