

CHAPTER II.

OLD FRIENDS

IT was a cheerless day of early spring in Boston, and the glow of a wood fire gave its final touch of cosiness to the perfection of Mrs. Broderick's drawing-room. What it was that stamped that room with the hall-mark of success above all other rooms that it was ever compared with, it might have been hard to say.

"It's absence of fussiness," said one.

"It's artistic simplicity," said another.

"Money," was a briefer comment, capped by as brief a one of "Brains."

Certain it was that both brains and money had been freely used in the bringing together of those harmonious tints and costly textures that went to create such a sense of pleasant repose.

It all seemed simple enough, the cheerfulness of the pink and green French silks, the delicate outlines of the Louis Quinze furniture, the one or two Greuze-like crayon heads upon the wall, the few bits of Dresden or Sèvres on the stands.

The cloudy afternoon was dim enough for the flicker of the firelight to be visible in the corners of the room, and to enrich with its glow the silvery