

not refuse me this pleasure. If you know how I have looked forward to it; how all this summer——"

"We are late," interrupts Miss Landelle, with placid indifference. See they are playing. Had we not better walk on a little faster, Mr. Frank?"

The words are checked on his lips as they have been checked many a time before. Her calm unconscientiousness is impenetrable all his enthusiasm falls flat before it. He obeys in silence, and they leave the group behind, and hasten forward to the croquet players. At the gate a bleary-eyed beggar sits crouched in the sun, holding out his hat and whining for alms. They pass him unheeded; only Reine stops abruptly, and goes over and addresses him.

"What nonsense!" exclaims Longworth, impatiently; "it is that drunken old scoundrel Jackson, who got thirty days for vagrancy and drunkenness, and has just served out his time. Now she is giving him money—what folly! I shall stop her—such a horrid old impostor——"

"You will let her alone," says Miss Hariott, softly, and looking with eyes full of tenderness at her little friend. "For alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sin, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting."

She goes. Longworth stands still and waits for Reine to come up. The momentary annoyance has passed from his face, something very different looks out of his eyes as they linger on the pair before him. It is a picture he never forgets—the cringing, red-eyed beggar in his dirty rags, shrinking like a fowl lizard in the sun, and the girl with her soft, tender eyes and pitiful young face looking down upon him. But Mr. Longworth chooses to grumble when she rejoins him.

"Why do you let yourself be imposed upon by these people?" he says. "That is the most rascally old humbug in the town. He drinks, he steals, he beats his wife. He will go straight from here and get drunk on what you gave him. You should exercise discrimination in your charities, my dear child."

"Discrimination is not one of the cardinal virtues. I do not possess it, Mr. Longworth."

"But such a notorious old fraud——"

"He is old and poor, and half blind," she says, impatiently, for long suffering is no more one of Reine's virtues than discrimination. "Let me alone, Mr. Longworth; you are not the keeper of my conscience. You never do wrong yourself, I know. How can you be expected to find mercy or pity for weaker mortals who do?"

They have reached the gate. Longworth is about to answer, but Monsieur Durand comes up at the moment and joins them.

"I have been waiting for you Petite," he says. "*Bon jour*, Mr. Longworth. Are you the originator of this philanthropic scheme I hear them discussing, or is it Miss Hariott?"

"What philanthropic scheme?" inquires Longworth, shortly. "I have originated none."

"Then it must be the ever-excellent Miss Hariott. A scheme to help those poor people killed in the great mill explosion the other day."

"As those poor people are dead and buried, Monsieur Durand, I should imagine they were past helping by any scheme, however philanthropic," interrupts Longworth, grimly.

"Ah, pardon," Durand laughs. "It is that I express myself so badly. No, no, to help the families—the widow and the orphan. I have left them discussing the project instead of playing croquet, and waiting for you to come. Could they decide upon anything in this town without you, monsieur, I ask?"

He asks it with a shrug and a smile at Reine, and Reine hastily interposes, for she sees an ominous knitting of Longworth's brows.

"I dare say Miss Hariott did originate it," she says. "She is one of the chief sufferers always by these dreadful things. She bleeds in heart and pocket alike. What is the present proposal, Leonce?"

"Proposal! Their name is legion. A fancy fair says one lady, a charity ball says another, a concert says a third, with Monsieur Durand for *primo tenore* and Mademoiselle Reine for *prima donna*. I say no, no, no, to all. Let us have a play."

"I second the notion," says Miss Har-