

although prudence dictated silence on my part: "I came to U'pfield with a perfect understanding of the position I should occupy here Mrs. Godfrey."

It was a foolish and unnecessary speech and I was punished for it by the supreme indifference with which she ignored it.

"Miss Godfrey, as perhaps you are aware, is in delicate health; she has never been strong, but of late her health has been less good than usual; her spirits are uncertain and she should be kept amused; it will be your duty to keep her interested and amused as much as possible, and to humor her in every way. The doctor says that to thwart her wishes would be to increase the irritability of her nervous system." Mrs. Godfrey paused and trifled with an ivory paper cutter for a moment, and then continued. "It was against my better judgment that you were chosen to fill a position for which there are others more competent under the circumstances; but it was my daughter's desire that you should come, therefore I yielded to her wishes. It is needless to remark that I was surprised at your application for the place, as well as at your father's consenting to it, but I presume you have your own reasons; you will understand, however, that the fact of your relationship to my daughter must be laid aside and forgotten as far as possible, while you remain here. If you do not choose to accede to this condition, the alternative is simply—you must go."

With bent head, and in utter silence I listened, as the low, cruel voice spoke such humiliating words to me. Passionate anger swelled my heart, and I longed wildly for the right to say to this insolent woman—"go," as she had threatened to say to me.

Oh! if I could succeed in finding the will! The will, which would send from the doors of U'pfield this insolent intruder. How I would rejoice in that day when I should watch her go forth in her humiliation, to return, never more. I wished with all my heart for the power to humiliate her as she had humiliated me, and to obtain that power I resolved to control my temper and my pride, and to bear quietly any insult this woman might offer me; the more insulting she was now, the worse it would be for her in the future.

I make no excuse for my bitter, revengeful feelings towards my aunt; that I was acting wrongly in allowing my evil passion such full play; that I was encouraging an unchristian and unwomanly hatred, implacable and merciless, to fill my heart against my enemy, I was fully aware. And yet though I fully realised my sin, though I would not pray while its burden lay upon me: though I was unhappy on account of it, yet I would not put it from me, nor yield one iota of my purpose. Wilfully, wickedly I clung to my sin, and repentance came too late.

"You may rest satisfied that I shall never presume upon my relationship to Helen," I answered proudly.

"It is well," was the curt response. "And now," she said, after a few other unimportant matters had been discussed, "I think I have said all that is necessary; you may go. Here is a letter for Miss Godfrey; be good enough to take it to her."

As I took the letter from her hand, I fancied I saw a malicious smile on her thin lips.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN I had left the room, I glanced carelessly at the direction on the envelope! but I started when I saw the handwriting. I knew it well—it was Douglas Rathburn's!

This then, was the meaning of Mrs. Godfrey's smile as she gave me the letter. With a sinking heart, I wondered where Douglas was, and why he should write to Helen—what was Helen to him?

By the postmark I perceived that the letter had come from Winchester. So Douglas was not in Upton at all "Ah well!" I thought—"may be it is better so."

I found Helen on the lawn sitting beneath the shade of a large spreading cedar. A magnificent hound lay beside her, and she was playfully pulling his ears and teasing him as I came near. It was a pretty picture and pre-occupied as I was, I was fain to pause a moment to regard it.

Space will not permit me to describe in detail the beauties of U'pfield Park! but I think I had rarely seen it look more beautiful than on the morning in question. The great

trees in the park were laden with their dense foliage of varied shades of green, and cast shadows, so deep and dense that in some places one could almost imagine it to be night instead of morning.

On the left could be seen the dim vista of a noble avenue of oak, beech and sycamore. Smooth-shaven lawns ornamented with costly fountains and marble statues and dazzling patches of brilliant-hued flowers surrounded the quaint Elizabethan mansion which looked on this calm summer morning, a home worthy of the love and pride of its owner. And all this—all this was Helen's! Here I glanced again at the pretty, golden-haired girl who was heiress of the manor! and though, strangely and unaccountably, I felt my heart drawn to her, softened perhaps by her child-like, unaffected sweetness; yet as I advanced towards her I said to myself—"not always shall this be hers! if there is a will, I shall find it."

"Oh cousin Enis! I am so glad you have come at last! Prince and I have begun to tire of each other's company. Have we not Prince?"—turning playfully to the dog, who, as if to discountenance such an idea, lifted one huge paw and laid it on her lap, with a deprecating glance from his soft brown eyes.

"I am sorry you had to wait so long Helen, but your mother detained me. This letter is for you."

"A letter!" she cried, and put out her hand eagerly for it.

"I shall leave you if you wish, whilst you read it," I said coldly.

"Oh no! pray do not; there is no need,—" She did not complete her sentence for as she caught sight of the handwriting on the envelope a rich blush swept over her pure *spirituelle* face, and a happy smile curved the red lips. I seated myself a slight distance from her and with many a jealous pang watched her furtively as she read Douglas' letter, and wondered miserably what there could be in it to cause the flickering color to come and go on the delicate face of Helen Godfrey. Yet even then I did not hate her, though I had now an added cause for doing so, for I scarcely doubted that she had won Douglas Rathburn's love—I was jealous of her—bitterly jealous, yet I did not hate her, and the thought that I loved her, notwithstanding the wrong I did her, has been my greatest comfort.

"Cousin Enis." Turning my head I found her looking shyly at me, her blue eyes brimful of a sort of gladness which had not been there when I gave her the letter.

"I think Helen, I should prefer that you did not call me *cousin Enis*," I said coldly.

She looked at me, hurt and bewildered at my words and tone.

"Why?"

"Your mother desires that the fact of our kinship should be ignored," I answered curtly, and expecting to see her pout and exclaim petulantly, I was surprised when she blushed and looked confused, hanging her head as she murmured:

"Of course if Mamma wishes it, I must; but I am so sorry, dear Enis" and she nestled close to me and slipped one of her little snowy hands into my larger ones. I did not know then, but I discovered afterwards that Helen though devotedly fond of her mother, was *afraid* of her and never ventured to oppose her when once Mrs. Godfrey had laid down the law on any point.

"What were you going to say to me Helen?" I asked.

"It—it was about this letter; Douglas—you know Douglas Rathburn?"

"Yes."

"Well he—he asks me in this letter to be his wife, Enis"

"Indeed! Do you love him, Helen?" I asked slowly.

"Love him? I cannot tell you how much I love him; I worship him. He is my king."

She knelt beside me her clasped hands hanging loosely down before her; her head thrown slightly back and such a look of worshipful love, and shining happiness in her face, that I was almost startled and involuntarily the thought flashed through my mind—

"If this idol of hers were shattered; what would she do? it would kill her; I am sure."

With a sudden, pitying impulse, I laid my hand on her shoulder and cried:—