

perhaps without knowing it she is jealous of Longworth's regard.

"Then our discussion ends here," she says, calmly, after a short silence. "You refuse my offer, and these young women are to come. Mr. Longworth, will you be the one to meet them? I would not trouble you, but that you tell me you are going to New York."

"It will be no trouble; it will be a great pleasure. Yes, I will meet them and bring them home."

And then silence falls, and in that silence the clock on the mantelpiece strikes ten. Longworth rises.

"As I start by the first train I will get to bed betimes. Good night, my dear Mrs. Windsor, and for two or three days good bye."

"Good bye," she says, and rises and looks full in his eyes. "You have disappointed me more bitterly to-night, Laurence, than I ever thought mortal man could do again."

"But you do not care for me the less, I know," he answers. "Your regard is something I hold very precious; I cannot afford to lose it. How truly I return it, how profound is my gratitude to-night, it would be useless for me to try to tell. From my heart I thank you."

He holds both her hands in his close, warm grasp. He is the least demonstrative of men. To most people he is cold, silent, self-centred; but this widowed mother's regard for him has always seemed to his eyes a sacred and pathetic thing.

He is out once more in the starlight, windless and warm.

Two of Fortune's kisses in one day—well, yes, it is rather odd. To decline these kisses seems to have no particular heroism—nothing more than any man of principle might do. He would like well enough to be a rich man, but not at the cost of self-respect.

"I may as well write to Chapman, too," he thinks, "and make an end of it. My uncle took me up twenty years ago, and let me go adrift on the world after. My own fault, I know, but it is rather late in the day to whistle me back. Now he has taken up young Dexter, and when the whim seizes him is ready to throw him to the dogs and reinstate me. How long would I hold his favour, I

wonder, and if I were sent into outer darkness a second time, who would be heir-apparent number three? So I am to meet grandmamma's granddaughters! Humph! Mrs. Windsor's granddaughters ought to be pretty!"

He reaches home, lets himself in, and goes up to his room at once. They are singing and playing cards in the parlour, but he feels in no mood for music or cards. He turns up the gas, sits down, and dashes off his letter on the spot.

"BAYMOUTH, MASS., May 20, 18—.

"DEAR CHAPMAN,—Quite impossible for me to go south this year. Could not think of stealing down in Frank Dexter's absence and supplanting him. Would it not rather look like the work of a sneak? Sorry to hear the governor is breaking. Should like to see him immensely, and shake hands if I could. But I cannot as things are. Have not the slightest ill feeling towards him; I consider his letting me start out to fight Pato single-handed as the very best thing he ever did me. As to creeping in behind Dexter's back and trying to curry favour, I could not do it, you know. The *Phoenix* keeps me in bread, and beefsteaks, and hocks—just at present I ask no more. Waiting for dead men's shoes would never agree with my constitution. Dexter's a likely young fellow besides, and, as his mother has worked so hard for a fortune, I think he ought to have it. My uncle has no right to bring him up a prince and turn him out a pauper. So I cannot go, Chapman; but, all the same, I am obliged to you, and remain as ever, &c.,

"LAURENCE LONGWORTH.

"P.S.—Let me know if there is any danger. I should not like the dear old uncle to go without one good bye. He was awfully good to me in the old days.

"L. L."

CHAPTER VI.

GRANDMAMMA'S GRANDDAUGHTERS.

MR. LONGWORTH is up betimes next morning, and on his way to the office. He has a few letters to answer, and instructions to give to his chief staff officer, O'Sullivan. These do not occupy him long; as eight strikes he is standing on the piazza of the white