

and duped us all. You played your part, as *Lydia Languish* very well last night but you shine far more brilliantly off the stage than on. You knew how to make your very perversity, your petulance, bewitching. Your very pride and defiance held a curious charm. You kept me off, and knew that in doing it you lured me on. You were the furthest possible from my ideal woman, and yet you captivated me with your very faults.

I believed in you with as trusting a simplicity as the rawest and most unlicked cub of twenty. I was all the more eager to win you because you seemed so hard to win. It was a well played game; but your husband, with a man's natural impatience for his wife, comes before your plans are matured and spoils all. Once before a woman deceived me, a girl younger even than you; but I was a hot-headed boy then, and her task was easy. Now, in man's maturity, with the average of man's judgment in most things, you have done it again, with a skill and cleverness no one can admire more than I do. Laura Longworth was only weak and empty-headed; you are heartless, treacherous, and false to the core!"

She has not spoken or stirred—he has given her no chance to speak; but if he had it would have been the same. If her life were the forfeit she could not save it by uttering a sound. He turns with these last harsh and merciless words, and so leaves her.

Six days have passed. It is a bleak afternoon early in October. In Mrs. Windsor's pretty sitting room a fire burns cozily, and casts its red gleams between the crimson-silk window curtains. In a great armchair before this fire, wrapped in a large fleecy white shawl, Mrs. Windsor sits.

She is not alone; her younger granddaughter is sitting by the window looking out. It is not owing to any special pleasure Mrs. Windsor takes in her younger granddaughter's society that she has her here, but the cold in her head, and the perfect tempest of sneezes that now and then convulse her, have flown to her visual organs. With eyes weak and watering one cannot amuse one's self with a book, and to sit here all day alone, and unable to read, is not to be thought of. Reine, then, is here

to read to her; but grandmamma had had sufficient, unto the day of fiction, and the sorrows of heroes and heroines; vexations of her own are beginning to absorb her.

"That will do," she says, pettishly. "Ring for Jane; this lemonade is cold."

Reine rises and obeys. The bleak light of the overcast afternoon falls full upon her face as she does so, and Mrs. Windsor is struck by the change in it. More than once during the past week that change has surprised her. A great change is there, but it is so subtle that she can hardly tell in what it consists.

She does not sing, she does not play, she does not talk, she does not smile. She never goes out, she loses flesh and appetite daily, she comes slowly when she is bidden, and goes wearily when she is dismissed, with little more of vitality than an automaton might show.

"Reine," her grandmother says, and says it not unkindly, yet with more of curiosity than kindness, "what is the matter with you? You go gliding about the house like some small gray ghost. Are you not well?"

"I am very well, madame."

She resumes her seat. Jane appears with a fresh and steaming pitcher of lemonade, and departs. The young girl listlessly takes up her book.

"Shall I go on, madame?"

"No, I'm tired of it; paying attention makes my head ache. But you may as well remain. I expect a person who owes me a sum of money; he will be here directly, and he will want you to write him a receipt. Stay until he comes."

She leans back and closes her eyes. She is a trifle curious still concerning the change in her granddaughter, but she will inquire no further. Can it be her sister's absence? Nonsense! they seem fond of each other, but to fret over a week's separation would be ridiculous indeed. The house seems desolate without Marie's fair, bright face—she is astonished and vexed at the way she misses her.

Then Longworth is absent, too, has been absent for five days; and what is remarkable, was with Reine in the garden the night before his departure, and yet left without stepping in. This is not like Laurence. She opens her eyes