

They go home to the white house facing the bay, all ashine in the light of the young June moon, and Frank springs up to bed, whistling "My love is but a lassie yet." He would like to dream of his 'little ladies,' he thinks; but neither the dark, dreamy-eyed Reine, nor the girl with the golden hair, visit his sound slumbers all night.

CHAPTER X.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

THE evening comes. There is flutter and pleasant tumult in many Baymouth homes, as maids and matrons, sons and fathers, array themselves for Mrs. Windsor's grand field night. It is a radiant summer night, sweet and starlit, scented with the odour of dewy roses and mignonette—a perfect sight for youth, and gladness, and feasting, and making merry.

After considerable rumination, in which she has ignored the young ladies and taken counsel of Longworth, Mrs. Windsor has decided that it shall be a dancing party. Not an absolute ball—the word implies too much—but something supposed to be friendly and informal, with a sit-down supper, cards, and conversation for the elders, and unlimited dancing and flirtation for the young ones. She had thought of a dinner party at first, but heavy dinner parties were not favorably regarded in Baymouth, and when Mrs. Windsor did open her house, she honestly wished to please her guests. To maintain her own dignity was, of course, always the best essential; but that maintained, why, then, everybody must go home delighted.

Longworth, too, who knew Baymouth tastes, pronounced in favor of the dance; so a dance it was to be, with a band and a supper from Boston.

Of all who stood before their mirrors and arrayed themselves sumptuously, not one young beauty of them was in a more feverish flutter than Frank Dexter. An irresistible and ridiculous longing to see this goddess described by Longworth was upon him. He would be glad to meet Mlle. Reine once more, of course, and see those deep, dusk eyes light into sunshine as she welcomed him; but that other, that unseen sister,

it was of her he thought as he dressed. He grew hot and angry in the struggle with buttons and collars, and cuffs and studs, and neckties and gloves before his glass. Never had he labored so hard, never had he been so disgusted with the result. Certainly it was not a handsome face Frank saw, and the genial boyish jollity that was its principal attraction was sadly marred by an anxious scowl to-night. But he finishes at last, and flushed and heated, goes down to wait for Longworth.

Waiting for Longworth is, if possible, a more trying ordeal than dressing. Longworth has gone back to the office after dinner in his customary coldblooded and unexcitable manner, remarking casually that he may be late, as there is a broadside of vituperation to be poured into a brother editor in next morning's edition, but will endeavor for Frank's sake to slaughter the enemy in as brief a space as possible. Nine comes, and there is no Longworth. A quarter past, and Mrs. Totty Sheldon, dazzling in the salmon pink and pearl necklace—an old *gaze d'amour* of Longworth's by the way—her large, beautiful arms, and plump, polished shoulders sparkling in the gaslight, sails in.

"Will I do, Frank? Do you like my dress? Are you coming?"

"Can't, unfortunately, yet awhile—waiting for Longworth. Impossible for me to go without him, you know. Your dress is ravishing, Totty—you are bound to be the beauty of the ball."

"No hope of that, I fear. You forget Larry's description of Miss Landelle. Only I wonder if he meant it. Well, *au revoir* for the present."

She gathers up her rich train, and takes his arm to the cab waiting at the door. Mamma, in a golden brown silk that has seen some service, follows, and they drive off. Frank paces up and down, growling inaudible anathemas upon Longworth, lingering over his imbecile newspaper paragraphs for no other reason, Frank is convinced, than to exasperate him into a brain fever.

But all things end, and presently the laggard comes, the red tip of his cigar announcing his approach from afar off, with his usual leisurely and deliberate step. No human being can recall the