

"I do wish that you would be reasonable, Jacob."

"I wish you wouldn't call me Jacob when you have told me that you didn't like the name."

"Oh! did I say that? I do think that I like it, since you have no other. Indeed, Jacob, if it were not for some faults that you have I think I should like you better than anyone."

The young man sat down on a step lower than the one that the girl occupied.

"Perhaps," he said, gloomily, "you will discuss these faults of mine; I may suggest some to add to the list. My name is one; but that is hardly my fault, and I believe that I could change it by an act of the Legislature or something of the kind."

"But I should always know that your real name was Jacob," said Millicent, laughing; "I shouldn't mind your name, but there are some things that would grow worse, and worse."

"My age, I suppose."

"Yes, for one thing. Ten years is too much difference."

"But you will grow older."

"There will still be ten years between us."

"The general opinion is that a woman grows old faster than a man. You would catch up to me."

"Ah! that is like most general opinions, wrong. I have made my own observations on that subject. To the close observer, middle-aged women are younger, even in appearance, than men of their own age."

"Where did you learn so much about men?"

"Have I not been in all the large cities here and in most of those in Europe? Can one not receive impressions of strangers as they pass, and accumulated impressions form opinions. Men's eyes grow dull, and the lines of the mouth hard, and their faces heavy and meagre; while women's faces are still full of benevolence though their figures have lost their grace and their complexions their delicacy. Still, those women are young."

"Youth is then a condition of the mind, wise Sibyl?"

"Certainly, it is the capacity of receiving new impressions, meeting one's fellow-beings with sympathy, and undertaking new enterprises."

"Some people must then be born with more capacity for youth than others."

"To be sure."

"And I, who have by sex and nature less youth than you, and yet have wasted ten years more of it, must sooner become like those horrid middle-aged people."

"I am not speaking of you."

"You are not speaking of me? How inconsequent! I sat down here to listen to talk about me. Let us begin over again. You have said that you do not like my name and that I am too old."

"Oh! Jacob!"

"Yes, I am too old, and am to grow older. You have defined youth—what is age?"

"Oh! it is the enemy of the human race. Let us never grow old, Jacob."

"Ah, no, Millicent, let us never grow old, so only that we may stay young together," he said, flushing and edging a little nearer to her, while he looked up in her face with a half-humorous smile. But she drew away farther from him.

"Well!" he continued despondently, "and what is my next fault. Come! say it!"

"You do not believe in friendships between men and women. My own belief is that no woman can expect to be reasonably happy unless her husband can have a friendship for her."

"You seem to have thought a good deal about marriage—even if you are so averse to it."

Millicent, with heightened color, made a movement to rise. Jacob stretched up both hands and taking hers, pulled her back gently to her seat.

"You are so rude," she continued; "that is another fault. I should want my husband to be so polite to me. It would make me happier than almost anything."

"And I should want to have the liberty of quarrelling with my wife whenever I chose, and making it up again; but I suppose that you would like a naive idiot like that Hastings."

"There again," said Millicent, in an injured tone, "how ridiculous you are! You are so jealous, and about nothing. What could be more innocent, when a party of people are out on a blossom-gathering, than that two of them should run down hill together, and yet from the time you made about it—it's too absurd!"

"But you took his hand and ran laughing."

"As children might. You and he had raced together, and you had beaten him easily. You had picked my blossoms for me, and I had walked with you. He was my guest, and I surely owed him some politeness."

"To give him your hand, I suppose, and caper and laugh with him."

The recollection quite overcame Jacob with anger. He rose and walked a few paces across the lawn and then returned. "Well! I am named Jacob. I am old. I am rude, and I am jealous. Oh! yes; and, I forgo. I don't believe in Platonic friendships. Five faults; I think that there are seven deadly sins. Not that I

have the least idea what they are. I know that seven always seemed a small allowance to me. I surely have more than five. More than five would go to the make-up of any respectable man. What! you can name no more? I could accuse myself of more than that. Don't you know another?"

"Yes," said Millicent, gravely, while she put some of the sweetbrier roses in her breast.

"I am impatient to hear. I sit here only for that. The sixth fault. Come!"

"That you don't care for women's society."

Jacob rose and folded his arms, facing the girl, and looked long at her. Then he threw back his head and laughed heartily: "Upon my soul! that is a fault! Have I not liked your society?"

"Yes, but that of no other woman."

"Well! Upon my soul! Talk of jealousy. I never saw its opposite to set forth. Do you wish me—should you wish, I ought to say, your husband to be fond of other women's society?"

"I don't like a man's man," said Millicent, evasively.

"I am more edified," said Jacob, seating himself again, "this evening than I ever was in my life. Why do you not like a man's man?"

"Because," said the girl, becoming a little nettled at her companion's searching look, "I know well enough how that works."

"I am waiting for information," said Jacob.

"A man's man soon wearies of the woman he loves, and he seeks men's society constantly. Men influence men more than women do. I should never be jealous of other women, for I could always be a woman; but men would be a contrary influence. I have seen the lonely lives of the wives of men's men," she paused.

"I am still listening," he said.

"At the best, men understand women very little, and men's men grow at last to understand them not at all. Men's men become at last to be a world quite apart. Their wives have no excuse for being, except inasmuch as they contribute to their comfort."

"Millicent, do you say that women are younger than men? I don't believe that men of sixty, or men that have been widowers two or three times, have thought this question of marriage out like you."

"I won't talk to you any more."

"You must. Back to our text. Six faults then—my name, my age, my native rudeness, my jealousy, my incredulity of Platonic friendships, and my being a man's man. You must name at least seven deadly sins to convict me. Isn't there another?"