

to which Berenice was an entire stranger.

The only friend they made in Kleinstein, with the exception of the Maestro, was Robert Howe, a young artist and a countryman. Chancing to lodge in the same house, accident placed it in the young man's power to render the ladies a slight service, which eventually enabled him to make their acquaintance. After satisfying herself that his character and antecedents were irreproachable, Mrs. Ormerod, who was suspicious as well as timid, allowed him to achieve a certain degree of intimacy. An orphan, with no near connections, and having had but little experience of feminine society, Robert Howe was almost extravagantly grateful for Mrs. Ormerod's notice, and before long that lady had adopted the shy, sensitive lad as a *protégé*. To her Robert's friendship was in reality a boon, though she always persisted in ascribing to his side all the advantages of the alliance. Mrs. Ormerod was wont to declare that she was Canadian to the backbone, and Robert was an ally to whom she could express her unmitigated contempt for everything foreign, without any reserve. Her residence abroad had always been a purgatory to her; she could not and would not learn French or German, and in her intercourse with the outside world depended solely upon her daughter. Notwithstanding the differences of climate and customs, she made it a point of conscience to cling tenaciously to all her New World household ways, and was not sorry to have secured a friend who was willing to listen to her complaints. Robert delighted in believing himself an artist, though he had only artistic perceptions and a keen love of the beautiful, without being gifted with any decided power of expression. Having mistaken an appreciative taste for genius, he painted 'prettily,' was a tolerable musician, dabbled slightly in literature, without being able to excel in any art. Having a comfortable in-

come, he was not inclined to use any very violent exertion in order to push his way in the world, and his leisurely *dilettante* pursuit of art, his pleasant, purposeless enjoyment of life, exactly suited his temperament. There was always a great picture to be painted, a wonderful poem to be written, some achievements which, looming mistily in the far future, conferred a flavour of dignity and hopefulness upon an otherwise aimless existence. In the meantime, as a profitable psychological problem, he devoted himself assiduously to the study of his neighbours, and in this case found psychology a most interesting subject, and quite worthy of the undivided attention which he bestowed upon it.

By degrees, through the mother's ceaseless chatter, Mr. Howe learnt the simple history of his countrywomen. Mrs. Ormerod was a pale, wizened-faced little woman, with anxious blue eyes, and thin wisps of straw-coloured hair; it was difficult to realize that she had once been an exceedingly pretty girl, whose pink and white charms had won Gordon Ormerod's heart in a distant Canadian city. Alice Blaine had been a tradesman's daughter, with a small portion and a certain amount of petty ambition; but Gordon was the scrape-grace member of a wealthy and influential family, the only black sheep in the midst of a reputable and prosperous flock. Alice was endowed with wonderful powers of veneration. To her, Gordon was not only a handsome, jovial good-for-nothing, he was also a hero and a saint; his father—good-humoured, worldly-wise old Judge Ormerod—was majestic as Jove, and omnipotent as Caesar; the brothers, sisters, and all the numerous family connections, were superior beings, to be admired and revered at a respectful distance. Adoration so humble is a very subtle incense offered on the shrine of vanity. As the years went on, and the Ormerods learned to know their brother's low-born wife as