

and an heir to be proud of, and old James Longworth was proud of him. All the love of a money-grubbing life that might have been divided between wife and children was concentrated on this boy. He sent him to a northern college until he was eighteen, and then to Germany for the next four years to complete a most thoroughly unbusiness-like and uncommercial education.

The boy should never grub along in dingy warehouses, nor lose that bright and golden beauty of his poring over dry-as-dust ledgers. He should not even be a professional man; with the wealth he was to inherit what need of toiling to master a profession? He should be a young Georgian prince; he should marry by and bye of the elect of the land; he should rear sons to hand the name of Longworth, undefiled by commerce, down to dim futurity. That was the old man's ambition, and young Laurence was only too ready and willing to gratify it.

He led a lordly life; his pockets were filled with money, which he scattered hither and thither with a reckless prodigality. Mr. Longworth never stinted him. When he travelled it was *en prince*. Indeed, he was known as "Duke Laurence" during his life at Munich. With it all, he had his own ambition and high sense of honour, and notions of the obligations of a prince, and studied hard, and ended his course with university honours.

Among the varied and useful information not set down in the university course was a taste for smoking, for the unlimited consumption of lager beer and the other German nectars, for small-sword exercise, and soft-eyed, fair-haired Gretchens. About one of these frauleins he fought a duel the last year, pinked his adversary without doing him much damage, and finally returned home and fell in love with his second cousin, Laura.

This was his first serious *affaire*. That of Gretchen had been the veriest summer-day fancy—born and buried in an hour. But this was different, you understand. She was not unlike Gretchen either at sixteen; tall for her age, inclined even then to a delightful plumpness, all that flaxen hair falling fluffy and crimping to her waist, and in "luna-

tic fringe" to her very eyebrows. The blue eyes were rather small, rather light, rather expressionless, and the ready smile that came and went so incessantly rather vacuous, insipid, and silly. That is, it might seem so to hypercritical people. To Laurence Longworth, *etait*, twenty-two, Laura Longworth was a vision of purity, loveliness, and white Swiss dresses, and to win this most beautiful of her sex for his wife would be to crown his existence with never-ending ecstasy.

Miss Laura Longworth, otherwise Totty, at sixteen had no more mind of her own, no more individual soul, than a newly-hatched chicken; but she could see that young Laurence was handsome, and dressed in perfect taste, and wore such diamond studs and buttons as made her small, pale eyes open wide in wonder and admiration. His taste was not toned in those days. The lad was inclined to be foppish, and liked diamonds of the first water, and superfine linen and broadcloth. His presents, too, were such as any heir-presumptive might offer to his princess-consort, and Totty's white, fat little hands were hands to hold fast all they could grasp, even at sixteen.

The costly books and bouquets she did not care about, but the jewelry touched her inmost soul. It was tiresome of Larry to insist on lying at her feet on the grass, and reading dull poetry aloud by the hour out of those aforesaid blue and gilt books. Poetry bored Totty—so did books of any kind, in fact; but this was the only drawback she could find in her splendid young lover. And so the sweet, hot weeks wore on, and June was approaching, and Mrs. Longworth began to talk of fleeing from the summer heats, and going back to her Baymouth home.

A word of Mrs. Longworth. She was so remotely akin to the old millionaire merchant that she never dared to count upon the kinship, and she was a lady ready to dare a good deal. Her late husband, besides being only a distant cousin of James Longworth, had made him in early youth his bitter foe. Mr. Longworth was a good hater. He never pardoned an affront, never forgave an enemy, if he could help himself; and so when at the beginning Laurence had