

CHAPTER XLI.

A LUMP rose in Maud's throat, and a spasm crossed her features as she closed the door. Then she stopped to put a tray in order, making a noise in getting it even. It took her more than a minute to arrange it properly, but when she entered the parlor again her face was as though nothing had happened.

For a moment Beaumont looked at her keenly, but her features told no tale. The human heart is inscrutable, and a true woman never tells everything, even to her dearest. So, hidden in Maud's bosom was a little story of man's devotion, which ever after remained unspoken, and unforgotten, too.

Beaumont bowed over her hand and led her to a seat again.

"For months and months I have longed for this hour," he said. "Even after I started, three weeks of a journey seemed almost like years; but now that I see you, I know that I have not come in vain."

"Please don't talk in that way," said Maud, with a half-frightened look in her face. "Speak of anything, but not of that to-night."

"Mon Dieu! Surely I am not wrong?"

"Oh, something else, just for to-night,"