

centre skips over the puddles unsupported, sufficient unto herself. The whole party are bound for the Baymouth Croquet Ground, being members, one and all, of the Baymouth Croquet Club.

"This is all very fine," says Miss Harriott, with increased severity; "but as you have survived the Georgian heats for the past seventeen or eighteen years don't you think the delicacy of your constitution might survive them once more? Last night I received a letter from your respected maternal parent, making four anxious epistles in all, imploring me in pathetic language to inform her truly, and at once, what it is that holds you spell-bound in this dull town. That letter, young sir, I shall answer before I sleep. Frank, I conjure you! What am I to say to your mother?"

A flush rises over Frank's sunburnt cheek—he casts a quick glance at his companion, but that lovely serene face looks calm and more unconscious than the summer sky, the wonderful yellow brown eyes gaze straight before her into space, and are as nearly expressionless as beautiful eyes can be.

The young man sighs impatiently, and switches the heads off wayside daisies and dandelions with a quick, petulant motion. Every day the last state of this young Georgian grows worse than the first, every day he becomes a greater coward in the very intensity of his passion. Every day he grows more afraid to speak—the present is paradisaical. She never seems to weary of his presence, but also, he can see with bitterness, she never seems to weary of his absence. The same sweet smile welcomes his coming and speeds his going. If he went for ever, some presence tells him that sweet placid smile would bid him farewell the same.

If he speaks, and the dread fiat is No, he will be exiled from her presence, hope will die within him, the vulture of despair will gnaw at his vitals. And he is afraid to speak. To-day is good, even in its pain—so let to-day linger. But he knows and she knows—and he knows she knows—what keeps him here; and Miss Harriott knows, and all Baymouth knows, and the whole world is welcome to know, what detains him here, a far too willing captive.

"You do not speak," goes on his stern monitress, after a long pause, devoted to shirking puddles.

"My dearest Miss Harriott have not your own fair lips taught me many a time and oft that speech is silver and silence gold?"

"Some speech may be silver, yours, young man, has the empty ring of hollow brass. Your silence is golden, I allow in its rarity; but at present we will have brazen speech. What shall I say to Mrs. Dexter?"

"Oh, anything you please! Tell her not to fidget. The verb to fidget expresses my mother's normal state, though. Tell her I am all right, and being trained by you daily in the way I should go, and that when the yacht is launched my first trip shall be to see her. I'll take you along, if you like, Miss Hester—I promised that, did I not, on the Hesperia? Can mortal man promise more?"

"You will not go until the yacht is launched?"

"Can't I give you my word? Have to be there every day—ought to be there at this moment. No end of a bore, building a yacht."

"Very well," says Miss Harriott, resignedly, "I may as well get my spare bed-room ready; for the closing lines of your mother's letter, Frank, are these—'If that wretched boy does not leave Baymouth this week, I will be there next to fetch him.'"

Frank laughs.

"By George," he says, "let her come by all means, Miss Harriott. I shall be uncommonly glad to see the poor little *mater*, and then I can take her home in the yacht. Miss Landelle, will you not come, too? You will enjoy the trip, I am sure."

"Are you?" responds Miss Landelle; then I am not at all sure. Do you forget, Mr. Frank, that I am always seasick, that I cannot sail down the bay in the calmest weather without being ill? I should like the yacht and the company, but not the *mal de mer*. I think you must ask Reine instead."

"Mademoiselle Reine is asked, of course—that goes without saying. But you"—Frank's voice drops almost to a whisper in the intensity of his eagerness—"Miss Landelle, surely you will