

"One of them is not from France. Barring the slight drawback of having been born in Paris, and having had a French father, she is to all intents and purposes an English girl. She has lived in London all her life."

"And the other in Rouen. She told me that, although she was wonderfully reticent about herself. Think of the little brown-eyed pussy sitting there so demurely day after day, listening to Frank and I discoursing Baymouth, and never dropping a hint that she was going there."

Longworth laughs slightly.

"She is a young person who can keep her own secrets if she has any to keep, and hold her own with the stately grandmother. I don't think Mademoiselle Reine and Madame Windsor will hit it off well. Mademoiselle is wiser in her generation than the little one."

"I can't like Mrs. Windsor," says Miss Hariott impetuously. "I can't forgive her for being so flinty to that poor daughter of hers. How dare she leave her in poverty because she ran away with the man she loved? I suppose poor Mary Windsor did die poor?"

"Madame Landelle certainly died poor—extremely poor, from what I can learn. Marie is communicative enough. Landelle taught French and music—mamma was always ailing—who ever knew an American matron who was not always ailing?—her doctor's bills so ran away with poor Landelle's earnings that they were perpetually in debt, perpetually receiving notices to quit from indignant landladies. I can infer, too, that poor mamma was fretful and fractious, eternally bewailing the luxury of the past and the misery of the present. I think that unlucky Hippolyte Landelle must have realized the dismal truth of the proverb about marrying in haste and repenting at leisure. I think he fully expiated his sin of running away with an heiress. But she is dead now, rest her soul, and on the whole Madame Windsor is disposed to act generously towards her granddaughters."

"Is she disposed to act kindly?" inquires Miss Hariott, abruptly.

"Well, you know, indiscriminate kindness is not one of the weaknesses of her nature. In her own way, and if they will let her, I think she is."

"What do you mean by 'if they will let her?'"

"If they are like Uriah Heep, 'umble, if they humor her, if they take pains to please——"

"If they cringe, if they crawl, if they toady—bah! I have no patience with the woman, nor with you either, Larry, when you defend her."

"Come away, Miss Hariott, don't let your feelings carry you away. She is kind. Does not the party look like it?"

"This party is for her own sake, not theirs. 'I am the greatest lady in the land. It is due to me that my granddaughters are received into the very best circles of this manufacturing New England town. Having received them, a slight shown to them is a slight shown to me. I do not like them, they are intruders, but I am Mrs. Windsor of the Stone House, and nobility obliges. Therefore they shall be presented to awestricken and admiring Baymouth in a grand *coup de theatre* on Thursday night.' Don't let us talk about it. I have no patience with the woman, I repeat."

"So I perceive. I think it would be better and more like you, Miss Hariott, if you had. She is a profoundly disappointed woman—disappointed in her ambition, her love, and her pride. And it is not your *metier* to be hard on the absent."

"Thank you, Larry, says Miss Hariott, and holds out her hands. "You are a friend. Come, what shall I play for you? Here is one of Chopin's marvels in two dozen flats, and no end of double sharps. Will you have that?"

They linger long, and Candace brings in tea and transparent biscuits. Longworth is "tame cat" enough to like tea, and sips the cup she gives him with relish. They fall to gossiping about new books, until Frank, whom literature naturally bores, yawns dreamily, and brings the eye of his hostess upon him.

"Take that child home and put him to bed," she says to Longworth. "We might have known it was dreadfully indiscreet to allow a boy of his tender age to sit up until a quarter to eleven. Good night, Franky; good night, Larry, and thank you for everything."