A QUEER BOY.

Some of the Ways in Which He Develops His Oddities.

He doesn't like study—it "weakens his eyes,"
But the "right sort" of book will insure a surprise.
Let it be about Indians, pirates, or bears,
And he's lost for the day in all mundane affairs;
By sunlight or gaslight his vision is clear.
Now, isn't that queer?

At thought of an errand he's "tired as a hound,"
Very weary of life, and of "tramping around;"
But, if there's a band or a circus in sight
He will follow it gladly from morning till night.
The showman will capture him, some day, I fear,
For he is so queer.

If there's work in the garden his head "aches to split,"
And his back is so lame he "can't dig a bit;"
But mention base-ball, and he's cured very soon,
And he'll dig for a woodchuck the whole afternoon.
Do you think he "plays 'possum?" He seems quite sincere;
But—isn't he queer.

—M. B. S. in St. Nicholas.

FOILED AT LAST.

Josephine Mayhew was left an orphan in her childhood, the sole inheritor of her father's princely fortune. Her guardian conscientiously fulfilled his duty in the proper investment of her money, but left her intellect and character to be formed by the servile crowd of money-worshipers who surrounded her. Consequently she grew up selfish and haughty, impatient of contradiction, claiming and receiving homage and admiration as her right. She possessed great beauty of both face and figure, and was well educated and accomplished.

Josephine resided with her guardian. He was a widower, and his family consisted only of himself, Josephine and his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Monroe. Mrs. Monroe was a nice, patient little woman, scarcely more than a child in years or strength of character, yet old in sorrow and trouble. She had married George Monroe against the wishes of her parents, who saw and comprehended his utter worthlessness, and very soon she rued her hasty step, for he proved wild and dissipated and careless of her comfort or pleasure.

Unlovely as was Josephine in many respects, the rich treasure of affection of many a manly heart was lavished upon her; but her heart remained untouched until she met Norman Remington. He was her equal in birth and station, and greatly her superior in moral worth and true dignity of character. She soon loved him with all the ardor of her passionate nature, and gladly plighted to him her troth. Norman lavished upon her the earnest devotion of a strong, loving nature. He thought he saw beneath her apparent heartlessness some true womanly sensibilities which he fondly dreamed it would be his care to awaken and develop.

Soon after their engagement Norman had expressed his disapproval of Mr. Gasper Fenton, one of the most persistent of her followers. He was of good family and of rather prepossessing appearance, but he had a dissipated, unsettled look. Josephine, with her womanly instinct, had mistrusted him from the first, and had only permitted him to join the train of her admirers that she might have the pleasure of scorning him when he should presume to propose.

There was to be a large charity ball, got up by the elite of the place.

Norman asked Josephine to go, extending at the same time his invitation to Mrs. Monroe. Much to Josephine's chagrin she accepted the invitation, and when alone she petulantly asked: "Why did you ask that low-bred widow to accompany us? You might at least have consulted my pleasure first."

"My dear Josephine, cast aside all such unwomanly thoughts and feelings. I pity her loneliness, and it surely will not harm us to give her one evening of pleasure."

Josephine shrugged her shoulders, but remained silent. She did not care for an open rupture with her lover, but she mentally determined to punish him by luring again to her side Gasper Fenton, whom he despised and hated, as did every honest man.

The ball had already begun when they entered, and Mrs. Monroe being claimed by an old acquaintance for the waltz just forming, Norman and Josephine were soon floating about in its dizzy mazes. After the dance he left her to speak to some friends.

Gasper Fenton, who had been watching his chance, now stepped forward and paid his respects to the haughty beauty. She was all smiles. And emboldened by his suave reception, he begged the favor of her hand for the set just forming. She graciously accepted, darting a look of triumph at Norman, who was just leading Mrs. Monroe to form one side of the same quadrille.

After the dance was concluded Norman led Mrs. Monroe to a seat and hastily excused himself. Turning to seek Josephine, he saw her just stepping through the open window to the balcony. The silvery moonlight struggled faintly through the parted curtains, and glistened softly on her satin robe as she swept from his view. He hesitated a moment and then strolled after them. Walking up to them, he offered Josephine his arm, without noticing Fenton.

"The night air is too chilly," he said, "after the heat of the dance. You had better return."

Meeting his rebuking glances with defiance, she said, jocosely: "Excuse me, Mr. Fenton. I suppose I have to obey."

Fenton bowed, saying, "Remember the next waltz is mine."

Norman hurried her in without giving her time to reply. He said nothing; but with a determined, almost a fierce look upon his face he led her to the conservatory and, placing her in a seat where they were hidden from view, he said abruptly, "Now, Josephine, explain your conduct."

"Really, Norman, your tone of command is highly offensive."

"Josephine, don't trifle with me. You have insulted me, and evidently with a purpose. I want you to tell me why you have thus openly defied my expressed wish by receiving that base scoundrel with freedom and suavity."

"You have no right to speak to me in such an authoritative manner. I resent it. You choose your own companions, and I claim the liberty of doing the same."

"Josephine, once more I will suppress my just indignation and beg of you to shun that man. He is, under the outward semblance of a gentleman a bold, bad man; an adept in all manner of evil, a gambler and a scoffer at women. You know me too well to think I would thus malign any one without undeniable proof. His very presence is contamination to any woman, and my wife must never consort with such an exceptionable character."

She arose with a gesture of impatience.

"You are really quite dramatic. If Gasper Fenton is so dreadfully wicked, why, your favorite, Mrs. Monroe, with her over-abundant supply of goodness, restores the balance."

Norman turned very white, but remained speechless. He followed her back to the crowded rooms. As they entered Fenton met them saying, "Really, Miss Mayhew, I began to think you had deserted me. Our waltz is just going to begin."

She took his arm, her overweening pride exultant at thus defying her lover.

Norman did not come near her again during the evening; but when she descended the stairs, shawled and wrapped for home, he stood ready to conduct her to the carriage. The drive home was a silent one. Mrs. Monroe, still excited by her unusual dissipation, chirruped merrily about the pleasures she had received; but the grim silence of her companions quickly quenched her flickering gayety and she sank back in the carriage oppressed, she knew not why.

Arriving home, Norman conducted the ladies to the house, and, with a cool good-night, retired.

"Putting on his dignity," said Josephine to herself as she went up to her room.

Next morning, after a restless night, a note was presented to her which, on opening, made her flush with anger and surprise. It ran as follows:

"Miss Mayhew:

"I find that I was completely mistaken in your character. We could never be happy together, and I shall consider our engagement annulled. Yours, etc.,

"Norman Remington."

A variety of emotions struggled in her heart; she had loved Norman Remington passionately. Pampered and spoiled as she had always been, she had never once thought that her rebellious folly would lead to this. Pride and resentment were dominant traits in her character, and she exclaimed, "He doubtless thinks that he has inflicted the direst punishment upon me for opposing his wishes and means to return to me when he presumes I am sufficiently humiliated; but he shall learn his mistake. When he next addresses me it will be as Mrs. Gasper Fenton."

One month after the eventful ball Josephine married Gasper Fenton. It was a brilliant affair, and the young couple started off on their wedding tour with all the pomp of circumstance which wealth affords.

Two years of unmitigated misery passed away. Josephine's revengeful act had recoiled upon herself. Her husband had proved to be more despicable than Remington had assumed. Restraint no longer necessary, he attempted no concealment of his evil companionship or his immoral practices. Nightly he either held an orgie at home with companions as brutal as himself or went abroad to some den of no doubtful character. He had long since ceased to treat his wife with any semblance of respect. He taunted her with coarse allusions to her love for Remington, which he knew she still cherished, and never ceased to worry her for sums of money.

One cold, wretched day in winter, as she sat by the window, gazing wearily out at the wildly drifting snow, her husband entered, and taking a seat beside her he said, "You do not look well, Josephine."

"Indeed I am quite well," she replied; for she would never acknowledge to him her increasing weariness. She well knew that he would rejoice rather than weep over her death.

"No, you are not well, and have not been for some time. You should see a physician."

"Yes, and make my will, I suppose?" she added maliciously.

A look of hatred flashed from his eyes, but he answered quietly, "I did not mean that, but it is certainly every one's duty, who has much property, to make a will."

"You are wonderfully anxious for my death," she said, bitterly. "However," she continued, with the semblance of resignation, "perhaps it would be as well. If you will bring an attorney here this afternoon I will ease your mind, if not my own."

His eye sparkled with this unexpected compliance, and he said, unhesitatingly, "and dare I—will you ——"

"O!," she said, quickly, "to whom should I leave my property if not to you? I have no near relatives or friends."

With a countenance radiant with ill-suppressed joy he took her hand and said:

"My dear wife, I hope you may live long to enjoy your wealth. I see I have mistaken you, and I humbly beg your forgiveness for my harshness toward you. You see," he continued, "I was madly jealous of that Remington, and feared you still cherished his memory, and it made me act unbecomingly. But after such an unmistakable evidence of your love I can doubt no longer. I shall return presently with a lawyer." And he hastily left the room.

Josephine cast a scornful, malignant glance at the retreating figure of her husband.

"Fool! does he think to blind me with his maudlin sentiment? I will outwit him yet."

Fenton, fearing to let her resolution cool, soon returned with a lawyer, and a will was quickly drawn up and attested and signed. This will Josephine gave to her husband with every appearance of satisfaction, and Fenton, locking it securely in his private secretary, muttered exultantly: "I never hoped to secure it so easily. It shall now be my care to see that she makes no other."

But Josephine was a match for his cunning. The very next morning she had another will drawn up, leaving everything to some distant relative whom she had never seen.

Her health gradually failed, and when the cold, raw winds of March swept dolefully around her dwelling she was confined to her room, and soon she was too weak to rise from her bed. She knew that before the balmy, life-giving air of summer would come she would be lying in her grave, but the thought of her second secret will was the source of an exultant joy even on the borders of the tomb.

Fenton, too, knew that she was dying.

"I will search," thought he; "she is sly and crafty, and perhaps she has eluded my vigilance and made a later will than the one I hold."

So he searched the house over, but found nothing.

"If she has any, it is secreted about her bed," he thought; and he watched her with cunning, cautious eyes. He soon detected her nervous habit of feeling about her pillow, and once thought he saw the corner of a paper.

"The sly jade!" he fiercely muttered. "She has one beneath her pillow; but, by heaven, I'll have it and destroy it!"

Watching his opportunity, he entered the room where she had been left alone. He had been drinking to drown his anger and disappointment, and when Josephine saw his fiend-like face, she shrieked with fear.

"Hush your noise! You thought to fool me, but I'll have that will that you've secreted about you, if I have to choke you to get it."

He made a rush toward the bed and snatched the pillow from beneath her head. Filled with fierce strength born of excitement, his wife clutched him about the neck with her attenuated hands, thus impeding his movements. He attempted to shake her off, but she clung to him with a deathly grip. Her sunken eyes glared frightfully; the round, red spots on her cheeks deepened, showing more vividly the ghastly pallor of her face, and her shrill cry for help rang through the house.

The servants rushed to the room, and dragged the infuriated madman from the bed just as his frantic clutches at the bed clothes had disclosed a legal-looking document. The dying woman sank back exhausted. The glaring eyes grew filmy and expressionless, the jaw dropped, and the clenched hands relaxed. She was dead.

Gasper Fenton was handed over to the authorities, and the last will and testament of the unhappy Josephine, beggaring her husband, was executed.

SENSATIONS AT DEATH.

The Events of a Lifetime Repeated in the Brain at Hanging or Drowning.

In *Blackwood* some curious examples are given by the writer of a well-known phenomenon—the fact that the events of a lifetime will pass sometimes in a moment through the mind of a person who is on the point of death by drowning or suffocation. Speaking of the death of Lord Ponsonby, who was hanged by the mob in Paris in 1791, and cut down before life was extinct, the author says:

He (Lord Ponsonby) proceeded to give an account of his sensation on returning to consciousness. He could not have been actually suspended in mid-air more than a few seconds, and yet in that brief space of time all the events of his past life passed through his mind. It is true that his life to the date had not been a very eventful one, being only 19 years of age, but every past sensation was renewed in all its freshness. It is also remarkable that he did not at the time experience any sensation of fear, while, he added, his was an essentially nervous temperament.

This remarkable mental power of calling up the past in moments of suspended animation I have heard frequently mentioned. One was the case of Count Zichy, in the revolution of 1848 in Vienna. He was caught by the savage mob, hung like Lord Ponsonby in the middle of the street, when his own regiment of dragoons charged down and cut the cords as he was swinging in the air. He fell to the ground and was supposed to be dead; but his recovery was a very different matter from Lord Ponsonby's, for he had suffered agonies, and for ten days had four men constantly with him. He describes exactly the same sensations as Lord Ponsonby; the scroll of what was a much longer life was unrolled, even the smallest detail rushed back on his memory; he had the same fearlessness at the moment, but he felt all the horrors of the agony when the danger was past.

A most interesting little book called "Admiral Beaufor's Experience of Drowning," bears testimony to this seemingly universal experience in sudden danger. "Thought succeeded thought," says the Admiral, "with a rapidity that not only is indescribable, but probably inconceivable by any one who has not himself been in a similar situation—the event that had just taken place, the effect it would have on my family, and a thousand circumstances, connected with home, traveling backward in time in retrograde succession." All this proves that duration of life does not depend on hours, but on the number of impressions conveyed to the brain.

Disgrace in Ireland.

She is an Irishwoman, bright, witty, entertaining, as an educated Irishwoman cannot help being. She was telling me of a gathering in a certain hotel parlor in the Green Isle soon after one of the periodical uprisings among the Irish people against landlordism. In mentioning certain facts regarding the persons present at this meeting she spoke of the imprisonment of this one or that as a matter of course. I remarked that it was a strange condition of affairs—that in which the prison had lost its taint. "Taint!" she cried. "Not to have been in jail is a disgrace!"—*Twentieth Century.*

Governments in Mexico.

Within sixty-two years Mexico has had fifty-four presidents, one regency, and one empire, and nearly every change of government has been effected by violence.

"THE DUCHESS."

CHAPTER XVIII.—Continued.

"I warn you," says she, in the same intense way, speaking almost under her breath.

"And I refuse to listen. I tell you I cannot live this thing out; I must end it one way or the other. You know—you must—that if you will say but one word—one—I—"

"Are you mad, that you speak to me like this?" exclaims she, recoiling from him. There is horror and condemnation and—something else—in her glance. Is it despair? She leans heavily against the trunk of a tree, and puts back both her arms as if to hold and cling to it. "I don't pretend to misunderstand you," she goes on presently, "but what I really fail to see is why I should say that word. Do you know?" with a faint and most unkind smile. "Can you tell me?"

"Norah!"

"Nay, hear me out. Now, once for all. It seems to me you are laboring under a delusion that I would gladly discel. It is indeed a matter of life and death with me, the speaking of 'this word,' that you," with a chilling emphasis, "seem to think! Am I so madly desirous to see you free that I—oh!" breaking off suddenly, as if suffocating, and making a passionate movement with her lovely naked arm, as if flinging from her some hateful thing. "It is insufferable."

"Don't go too far!" says Denis, in a curiously compressed tone.

"I could not," vehemently. "To say enough, that is the difficulty. But who could find words sufficient for such a cause. Has my manner, the manner of which you so sadly complain, not taught you that—that—"

"What?" catching her wrist.

"That I hate and detest you!" cries she, with a sudden burst of indignation, wrenching herself free. Her eyes are adame, her lips quivering. Never even in her loveliest moments has she ever looked so beautiful.

"So!" says he, bitterly. Her beauty is lost to him just then, though in a sense he sees it, and afterward remembers and recalls every charm; but now such wild rage governs his heart that only the keen hatred that is always so near allied to a keen love surges within his breast.

"Has it never occurred to you," says he, his own eyes flashing, "that you might teach me to return that feeling?"

"Return it as heartily as you will. The more heartily the better I shall be pleased."

"It has come to this, then. It is to be open war between us."

"I don't know about the coming, the newness of it. I have thought of you for a long time as I think now."

"In the old days of Ballyhinch!" His tone has again softened. There is even eager appeal now in the eyes he turns on her. Both the appeal and the altered tone only serve to madden her. Alas, alas, for those old dead days!

"At Ballyhinch," says she, growing deadly white, but still regarding him with an unwavering gaze, "you believed I was in love with you! Is not that so? You thought—" with a little low laugh—"that you were a hero, a being from another, a fashionable world, in the eyes of the little, simple country girl, with whom it pleased you to while away the tedious hours. Come—" standing back from him with her arms still clasped behind her and a mocking smile upon her lips that hides from him the misery of her eyes—"confess you did not know me then—that I was a silly country baby, if you will—but that, at all events, I was not foolish enough to bow down and worship you."

Oh, the self-contempt that awakes within her as she says this! The burning pain at her heart! Had she not bowed down and worshiped—and given, unasked, all the first sweet love of her life into his keeping? Her breath is coming quickly through her red, ripe lips.

The insolence, the beauty of her, rouses in Delaney an anger uncontrolable, but with it a passion more uncontrolable still. As she stands thus before him, defiant, lovely, he makes a sudden step forward and catches her in his arms. There is a second's almost deadly pause—heart beating against heart—a last touch of remorse—and then he kisses her as he has never yet kissed any woman, as he will never kiss another.

He loosens his arms—too late! A sense of his own act, a knowledge that he has sinned beyond redemption, so overpowers him that he can find no words in which to excuse himself. As he stands silent, stricken with regret, a low, sobbing breath falls upon his ear.

"Oh! that I could kill you!" exclaims the Duchess, in a tone so intense as to be almost inaudible.

They are thus standing, facing each other—she trembling, unnerved; he silent, remorseful—when a light footstep sounds upon her right. Involuntarily both raise their head and move a little further apart, as Miss Cazalet comes, with her usual slow, undulating step, from the shadows that lie thickly on the eastern walk.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Hopes and fears belief and disbelieving"

"Is it a rehearsal?" asks she sweetly, smiling upon Denis. "If so it hardly needs repetition, I think. It will bring down my house. You are both, so far as I am a judge, perfect in your parts."

The Duchess, pale as death, stands motionless. How much does she know? What has she seen?

"Don't be frightened. I shall not betray you," says Miss Cazalet staring straight at her with an abominable little laugh. "It is a secret as yet, I suppose, this very lively entertainment of yours, and I shall take care not to mention it unless—. You have kept it quite to yourselves, so far, have you not? How clever of you."

"Katherine!" begins Delaney.

"No, not a word. What should there be to explain to me? Secrecy is the principal thing in a matter of this kind is it not? It is always more amusing so, eh! At least, so I have been told. It adds a piquancy to the affair." It is impossible to describe the smiling insolence of her manner.

"You had better hear me," says Delaney, coming a step or two forward, a look of eagerness in his face—nay, more—an intense hope! "If you think—"

"I don't, I am sure," interrupts she with a clever haste. "But if you wish to insinuate that the extremely animated scene I just now witnessed was not acting, I fear it must mean a very serious quarrel between you and your cousin." She looks quite concerned. "May I not act as mediator?" She fixes her gaze on Norah, who breathes a little more freely. Is that all, then? Had she only heard those last angry words of hers, only seen the indignation of her look and gesture? Is she entirely ignorant of what gives rise to them?

"I think not. As I begin so I must flesh my feuds for myself," she says sententiously. Then, "Have you no one with you?" peering into the darkness behind, where Miss Cazalet is standing just on the moonbeam's edge.

"No," a little taken off her guard by this prompt question.

"Ah! Then you can take Denis off my hands," says the Duchess with a swift movement that at once separates her from the other two. She steps quickly past them and a second later is swallowed up by the shadows. With her goes Miss Cazalet's assumed indifference and smiling unconcern.

"You and your cousin are better friends than I have been led to believe," she says, turning a searching, a rather contemptuous glance on Denis.

"My cousin hates me," replies he, gloomily.

"You say that! Well, I should not have thought it."

"You of all others should!" retorts he, hotly. "You saw more than you pretend, Katherine; you saw all. And—"

"All! Oh, no!" says she, with an inexplicable smile.

"You saw enough at least to prove to you that Norah is in nowise to blame to-night, that I—I only—" he stops as though it were impossible for him to proceed, and a heavy sigh breaks from him. "I behaved abominably to her," he bursts out at last.

"I am not thinking of her—of the injury done to her fine feelings," coldly. "I am thinking of myself."

"I know; I understand that you have much to complain of. I can quite see that after this you will wish to put an end to—"

"I shall put an end to nothing," steadily. "Do you think," with a glance supposed to be fond, and so that makes his heart die within him, "that I could not forgive you so much, and that I have not formed my own opinion of this unpleasant matter! I believe the truth to be that you were led into it by a consummate coquette, a heartless, unprincipled girl!" The words seem to come from between her clenched teeth. Her eyes grow vindictive.

"One word, Katherine!" says Delaney, sternly. "You shall say no slanderous thing of my cousin. Remember that. It is impossible, having seen Norah, that you should think so of her."

"I have my own views, as I told you before," with a curl of her thin lips, "and I leave it to time to prove me right. Meanwhile," coldly, "it would be in better taste, I think, if you were to refrain from defending her in my presence. However, I have no intention of quarreling with you on such worthless grounds. Come. Let us return to the house."

* * * * *

"Well, I don't know that I ever enjoyed myself more," says Lady Glandore in her languid way, alluding to the joy of the past night. It is now once more a new day, and some of them are wandering aimlessly down the pathways that lead to the shrubbery, discussing the good and evil of the dead dance."

"I am sure I didn't," says Mr. Greene, who is as usual Norah's shadow. "But Miss Delaney is ominously silent.

"What cloud lies on your brain, Miss Delaney?"

"Norah? Nonsense!" says Lady Glandore, coming good-naturedly to the girl's rescue. "Don't believe her if she pretends to melancholy. To my certain knowledge she danced holes in her stockings. What could any well regulated girl desire more."

"Unless it might be stockings in previous to holes, I don't know," responds Mr. Greene, meekly.

"Oh! one might desire more than that," says Miss Cazalet with a little subdued smile.

"As for Nancy Blake—" Lady Glandore is beginning, when suddenly the two in advance cry 'Hush' simultaneously and come to a dead stop; their eyes are riveted upon a blank space in the laurel hedge before them, through which a back can be distinctly seen. Surely it is the back of Nancy Blake herself, and surely, too, that other back so close to her belongs to Lord Kilgarriff. All this might be as nothing; but what is that it obscures the dainty roundness of Miss Blake's waist?

With one consent the advancing army right about face and turn and flee—Lady Glandore, who is specially delighted by this little glimpse into her friend's preoccupations, laughing immoderately all the way. The Duchess, perhaps, is in a degree surprised. It is always a surprise to a woman to find that a man can see any charms in another, having once seen charms in her.

"Isn't Nancy delicious!" says Lady Glandore. "So execrably simple. I call it."

"So do I," says Mr. Greene, innocently misunderstanding. "I've always said that he was the dearest and simplest fellow I know."

"I didn't mean that," says Lady Glandore, a little warmly, who can make fun of a friend herself, but won't hear others do it; "what I said was—".

"That Nancy was 'delicious,'" puts in Sir Philip. "And who shall gainsay you? She is one of the few charming people still left upon the earth."

"Is she so charming?" questions Miss Cazalet, with a delicate lifting of her brows. "I suppose she must be, but I confess it is always a matter of wonder to me what it is you all see about her."

"It can't be a wonder this time at all events," says Mr. Greene mildly. "You saw it yourself."

"What?" sharply.

"Why, Kilgarriff's arm. That was about her, wasn't it?"

While Miss Cazalet is betraying her very natural contempt for this mean joke, Delaney, going up to Norah, touches her lightly on the arm.

"Come this way; I want to speak to you. I must," he says, pointing to a sidewalk that leads to the right. Something in his whole air induces her to accede to his request, and she turns aside and goes with him down the shaded unfrequented pathway he had indicated to her. A sudden turn in it effectually conceals them from the others on the upper walk, who by this time have swept on beyond hearing.

"Well?" asks she, coldly, stopping short and looking at him. What she sees sends a sharp pang to her heart. He is pale, haggard and wretched looking. Dark shadows lying under his eyes tell of a night passed without sleep, and his face is drawn and defaced.

"Norah, forgive me," he says, eagerly, trying to take her hand. "Is my sin so unpardonable a one that I dare not ask for mercy? Think—have pity on me. To you who do not care all this is as nothing, but to me—to me who love you so madly, so miserably, your anger is as death. Say you forgive me!"

"No, it is impossible," says the Duchess, slowly. The color has faded from her cheek and she has turned her eyes upon the ground. She cannot bear to look at him. And yet it is true; forgiveness she cannot grant him.

"Do not say that," entreats he, gently, but with a fierce undercurrent of agitation. "You should weigh well your words before saying such a cruel thing as that. See, I am going away this afternoon—in an hour or so—and I shan't be back until to-morrow; do not send me from you with this horrible weight upon my heart. Do not, I beseech you. I have been so many hours—so many sleepless hours—brooding on this thing that," with a heavy sigh, "I would entreat you to give me a kindly word, to lighten my remorse somewhat."

"A word—what can I say?"

"That you forgive me. It is a great deal to ask, I know, but—"

"I will not; I cannot," exclaims she, hurriedly, her eyes always on the ground.

"Well, so be it," says he wearily. He moves away from her, and then suddenly comes back again, and raising her face with one hand, compels her to return his regard.

"What a face!" he says. "All love and tenderness and sweetness, yet how hard, how unforgiving you can be! Are you flesh and blood, that you thus coldly renounce me? A moment since I said all this was nothing to you, because you did not care; but," passionately, "I spoke against my better judgment then—I believe against everything—that you do care. You were my friend once; you cannot be so altogether changed.

"And yet I am. I," with a little quick frown, as though something had hurt her, "I hardly know myself since I came here. Call me capricious, what you will, but only believe," eagerly, "that the girl you knew at Ballyhinch is not the girl you know now. All my tastes are altered. What I liked then I think worthless now; what then contented me seems now of the poorest value. Perhaps this may explain the change in me of which you complain; it must, it should," with a vehement desire to convince, "because there is no other reason, not one, for the—the dislike that I now feel for you."

She has said this rapidly, with a nervous haste; and as she finishes looks almost on the point of fainting. Delaney, who has been watching her, whilst listening with a curious light in his eyes, now draws back a step or two as if to go.

"I must accept your explanation, of course. There is nothing else left to me. Well, good-bye," says he, raising his hat.

"You are not going to the theatrical entertainment to-night, then, at the Barracks?" says she, with an evident effort at ordinary conversation.

"No. I am going to nothing pleasant—not even to the devil," says he with a short laugh. "Some fellows in my case might find it poor consolation in taking that road, but to me even such paltry comfort is denied. Will you come back to the house, or will you join the others?"

"Neither. I should like to remain here alone," replies she, turning impatiently away from him.

To be alone, however, is denied her. The last sound of Delaney's departing footsteps is still upon the air when Norah, glancing apprehensively to her right, sees Miss Cazalet advancing toward her from the upper walk.

"How fortunate!" says Katherine, seeing from a distance a desire on Norah's part to escape, and thus cutting it short. "I had no idea you were here, and I wanted so much to see you. There is something," with a peculiarly unpleasant smile, "I wish to say to you."

"Yes," says the Duchess faintly, instinct warning her that her hour is come.

"When next," begins Miss Cazalet in her clear, cutting tones, standing opposite to the girl and fixing her with her light, pitiless eyes, "when next you want to kiss a young man do not choose the shrubberies as the scene of action, and—do not choose Denis!"

"I ALWAYS KNOW WHAT I AM SAYING"

"You cannot—you cannot know what you are saying," gasps the Duchess, turning ghastly pale. The poor child is trembling in every limb—too horrified, too frightened to make any further protest.

"I do, perfectly. I always know what I am saying," says Miss Cazalet, calmly. "I saw you last night with Denis; I saw him—" she pauses and casts a glance of vivid hatred upon the shrinking girl before her. "Would you have me repeat it?" she says contemptuously.

"Do not speak to me like that," says the Duchess in a tone so low as to be almost inaudible. "If—if indeed you were there last night you must have seen that I did not—that," stammering painfully, "I was not in fault—that I did not do this thing of which you so cruelly accuse me. I," with a sudden uplifting of her tone, "I could not. He—the affianced husband of another woman—oh, no, no," covering her eyes with her hands, "it is not like me. It would not be me if I could do such a thing. You must know that."

Her breath is coming heavily from between her parted lips. All her natural honest courage has forsaken her. She has fixed her eyes, which have grown large and wild, upon Katherine, and even as the latter watches her two hearts-broken tears roll down her cheeks.

"You must know it," she says again, absolute entreaty in her tone.

"I know only what I see and hear," returns Miss Cazalet unmoved. "And—I saw you in his embrace. Your pretended anger afterward did not deceive me in the least. It was a mere part of a well arranged whole. However," carelessly, "there is really no reason why we should dwell on such a rather vulgar episode. I only spoke of it at all to warn you to—" repeating her words with cold, biting emphasis—"warn you to avoid Denis in the future."

"To warn me!" says the Duchess, recovering her courage at this insult and flinging haughtily.

"Quite so," calmly. "If you interfere with me and Denis again, I tell you openly that I shall inform every one here of what I saw last night."

"No one here would believe your version of it—no one," passionately.

"Still," with an unpleasant smile, "such stories damage! And besides, I hardly think you would care for me to make the experiment."

The Duchess makes a slight gesture with her little trembling hand. She cannot speak. A sensation of positive sickness is overpowering her. Oh, to get away from this horrible woman; anywhere, only away.

"You understand," says Miss Cazalet remorselessly, enjoying with an only half concealed amusement the girl's agony of shame.

"There is no reason why you should speak to me like this," says the Duchess, making a supreme effort to be calm. "Denis is nothing to me—nothing—and I am less to him! You mistake altogether."

"And last night—did I mistake then, too?"

"Denis was in fault then, I admit," pressing one hand tightly over the other as a help to sustain the difficult calm. "I told him so—just now."

"I know," says Miss Cazalet, with a peculiar glance.

"But you should remember," with a foolish, generous desire to exonerate him in

[TO BE CONTINUED.]