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## BY DORA RUSSELL.

Author of "Footprints in the Snow," "A Country Sweetheart," "A Man's Frivilege," etc.

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CHAPTER I., 11. 11.—Hugh Gilbert and Belle Wayland are bidding each other good by e at Brigh... ton as he is about to sail for India with his regiton as he is about to sail for India with his regi-ment. Belle promises to be true and at rees to meet him that evening for a final farewell. Upon her re-turn to the hotel, where she and her mother are stopping sne finds that Lord Stanmore, whose brother was the husband of Mrs Way and's sister has arrived and has invited her mother and her to dine with him that evening. Mr4. Wayland goes but Belle feigns sudden illness and is left apparently asleep in her r om. After dinner Mrs. Wayland asleep in her r om. After dinner Mrs. Wayland discovers that Belle has gone out to meet Gilbert and is very angry. Mrs. Wayland writes an account of the affair to her sister, Lady Stanmore and the latter comes immediately to Brighton.

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CHAPTER IV .- Lady Stanmore comes to Brighton and has an impo tant interview with Mrs. Wayland in which they decide Belle's future. Lady Stan-more reads a letter from Gilbert to Belle and lays her plans accordingly. She decides to intercept the letters between the lovers. Lord Stanmore be-comes deeply interested in Belle and invites his sister in-law, Mrs. Wayland and Belle to spend a tew weeks at his country residence.

CHAPTER v.-Belle begins a dairy in order that she may send an account of each day to her absent

CHAPTER VI.-Lady St nmore thinks over the situation. She decides that Belie is not in love with

Jack. Lord Richard Probyn calls upon the party and invites them to visit him at Hurst hall. He is greatly smitten with Belle. Lady stanmore opens a letter from Hugh Gilbert to Belle and burns it.

CHAPTER VII.-Lord Stanmore becomes jealous of Sir Dick. Belle tells Lady Stanmore of her en-gagement and that lady ridicules the idea. They go to Hurst Hall.

CHAPTER VIII .- Belle's diary continued. She tells Lady Stanmore of her dream about Hugh. That lady decides to write Mrs. Ballour.

lady decides to write Mrs. Ballour. CHAPTER IX.—Lady Stanmore destrovs a letter Belle has writen to Hugh Gilbert. Jack Stanmore confesses his love for Belle to his sister in law. Mrs. Wayland falls ill and the st y at Redvers court is prolonged. Sir Di k Probyn proposes to Belle and is refused Lady Stanmore gets a letter from Mrs. Balfour who went to India on the same ship with Hugh Gilbert-It contains the start ing news of Hugh Gilbert's marriage to Miss Vane. Belle is told the ews and is greatly shocked. In taking a morning walk sne breaks through the ice. breaks through the ice.

CHAPTER X. XI. XII -Stanmore rescues Belle from drowning. She takes cold and has a severe illness. A letter arrives for Belle during her illness and is destroyed by Lady Stanmore.

CHAPTER XIII .- Belle is convalescent. Stanmore proposes to her and in her anxiety to show Hugh Gilbert that she too has forgoten she accepts the offer. Stanmore and his sister in-law arrange matters and Belle acquiesces. The marriage is arranged for an early day.

CHAPTER XIV .- The eve of the wedding. Lady Stanmore writes to her friend in Bombay and tells her of the marriage and specially requests that the news be told Hugh Giblert whom she repre-sents as a triend only of Belle's.

CHAPTER XVII -THE ICE WOMAN. Lord and Lady Stanmore return to Redvers Court. Belle is plain of her low spirits. And when they not happy and Stanmore sees that she has not practice that statistic the statistic statistic statistic statistics.

Belle sighed restless'y, ard for a mcmet or two made no reply. Then she said suddenly, looking up in his face-'Stanmore, did you ever really care for anyone very much.

'What a question!' answered Stanmore, with a little laugh. 'Of course, I cared for you, and still care very much."

'But I mean in your youtb?'

It was a thoughtless speech, and Stanmore's brow darkened. He hesitated ; he averted his eyes from the fair young face by his side. Then he said slowly and with a sort of effort-

did care for someone very much; someone | years older than you. I had no right to care for.' 'And is she drad?' asked Belle.

But Stanmo e made no answer. He moved uneasily, and then left the balcony, and looked at the clock on the mantle-piece in the room *teyond*.

'My watch is tast I find, by that clock at least, but still Lucy is late,' he said, as he returned to the balcony. 'Ah, here she comes,' he added, as the dowager Lady Stanmore's brougham drove up to the house dcor.

In a few minutes she was in the room, and both husband and wife were glad of her arrival.

'Here is Belle talking like a blase young man. Lucy,' ssid Stanmore, 'and remind- the spreading branches of a huge elm. ing me in a most unpleasant fashion of my increasing years.'

'Belle, how can you be so disagreeable ? answered Lady Stanmore, smiling and looking at her young sister in-law. What tree. 'How quiet it is, isn't it? So diff- as he stood watching from one of the upp r has happened to put you out of sorts?'

'Nothing, Aunt Lucy; only I feel rather tired.

'Tired of admiration-tired of flattery. said Stanmore rather sarcastically. 'But thank heaven there is the dinner gong; come, Lucy, take my arm, and I hope Belle's dinner will put her in a better temper.'

Belle never talked any more after this of being weary. She smiled and jested at dinner, and she smiled and jested the next | to Sir Dick's ears. day, and on their jourr ey down to Redver's Court, Stanmore bad on reason to com- disappearing as it by magic, which it

more,' she said.

to her lips.

ed her days.

perfect trankness

uneasy heart.

Stanmores.

a very pretty woman."

ourite, you know, of ours."

slight reserve in her tone.

woman,' he answered kindly.

disbelief in everything pure or true.

herself bitterly, and in this spirit she pars-

But she was always very charming. It

'Is he coming to Hurst soon, Lady

Probyn?' she asked. 'He is a great fav-

'You must miss him so greatly,' said

'He is everything I can wish.' replied

Belle; 'he is so bright and good-natured.'

Lady Proben softly, and then she faintly

'It was a pleasure to us to have him,

answered Belle; but still when Lady

Belle's charming 'ace and gay careless

Probyn left the Court she did so with an

a young man was likely to forget? she

asked herself. Her boy had loved Belle

Wavland cnce, would he be quite indiffer-

tome so soon. But Sir Dick arrived on

the very day he had named. He was alt-

eyes rested on his face. His expression

'Have they arrived ?' he said quickly.

'Yes, I called on the bride last Friday.

'She is lovely; all the fellows in town

answered Lady Probyn. 'She is certainly

raved about her, and they were so awfally

had changed; it was less bright and boyish,

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'So you have arrived ?' she said. 'How delighted your mother will be ' Sir Dick was too much agitated to speak articulately for a few moments; and Belle considerately went on talking.

'She called on Friday,' she continued every time I see Lady Probyn I think her more beautitul. You are a happy young man to have the love of such a mother ' 'She-she is very good,' stammered Sir Dick.

'You must never do anything to vex ter,' went on Belle, smiling 'You must let her be the guardian angel of you lite,

who will keep you from all wi k-d things ' 'Do-do yau believe in guardian angels!' blurted ont Sir Dick.

'No,' and Belle shook her head ; 'I once did, bu' not know.'

'I thick you could be one.'

'Me! I am afraid it would be an angel of darkness then. I am of the world, world-

'Oh ! Lady Starmore !'

'Quite true, I assure you. If you were

I should say, 'You will learn rothing good from the present Lady Stanmore.' And Belle laughed

'If I were you son !' repeated Sir Dick. 'Yes, Belle, in my youth, as you say, I | with a laugh also. 'Why I am years and 'But years do not always make age.

Some people's youth has quite a sudden death. I teel far older than you.'

sun? Suppose we go and sit on that seat under the big tree over there? I have got plenty of flowers, I think."

'Let me carry them for you.'

blossoms she had culled, into his hand, and th y walked together across the sunny l.wn to a more sheltered part of the grounds, and sat down on a rustic seat that Belle had pointed out, placed beneath whose green leaves were fluttering in the

leaning against the gnarled trunk of the erent to town.

'I don't know, I am sure; I sighed to leave town; I was weary of the late hours, the constant whirl from one place to the other; the sameness of everything; but now I think I am beginning to find the country du l! Stanmore and I dined alone last night, and I assure you it was by no

means lively." These words were far from unpleasing

'That reminds me,' he said, his stammer

'Yes, Belle, once,' answered Stanmore, rather in a marked manner. His words recalled to her mind the miserable morning when she had so nearly lost her life, and her brow instantly cloud. ed. 'I have changed my mind, I won't row this afternron,' she said looking at Sir Dick. 'Oh, do, Lady S'anmore,' he en'rea'ed,

'I have never been on it,' she said.

'it will be so beautiful with the sunlight on the water. Let me run down and see about getting the boat ready for you.'

He was so much in earnest that Belle at lest gave her consent, and Sir Dick hurried away to prepare the boat for her, and Belle ard Stanmore were alone.

'Is this a very wise thing to do, Belle?' asked Stanmore gravely. 'To do what? To row on the 1 ke with

Sir Dick ? What harm is there in it ? she a swered.

still gravely. Bnt Dick Probyn is young and imp essignable ; is it kind to him ?' My dear Stanmore, what harm can I do him ! It the young man is foolish it is his

own f-ult, not mine." 'Yet I have known a young man's life ruined by a woman. You would scarcely like to break Lady Probyn's heart I sup-

pose ? 'You make mountains out of mole-hills, Stanmore. What has Lady Probyn's

heart to do with Sir Dick admiring me-if he does? Stanmore looked at her strangely for a

moment or two. 'You are the coldest woman that ever lived, I think, Belle,' he said. 'Have you

no human feelings; no human love in all your heart ?' She returned his gaze almost defiantly. 'No, rone, Stanmore,' she answered ; 'I

told you so before I married you-I have none. 'I think it was an ice woman that I fished

out of the lake,' said Stanmore, with some bitterness in his tone and manner. 'Yes,' replied Belle slowly, still with her

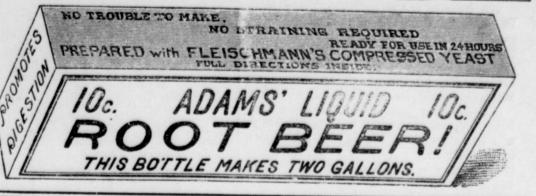
eyes fixed on his; 'an ice woman.'

Stanmore said nothing more. He rose and left the room, but halt an hour later, windows Belle rowing with Sir Dick on the sunlight waters of 'he lake, he asked him-

self a curious question. What makes her like this, I wonder? he thought. Some thing must have done so She's the strangest creature ; truly as she said 'an ice woman;' ' and Stanmore's heart was disturbed within him.

CHAPTER XVIII - PLAYING WITH FIRE.

In the meanwhile Belle and Sir Dick were rowing together on the tranquil waters of the lake. It was a perfect day; the



e'ting reaily to care for me,' she thought. But do men ever care as we do? They torget easily and quickly enough at all events--ift r they have spoilt our lives ' As she approached the house Stanmore

saw her, but he did not go to meet her. Her words before ste bad gene out to row 'To you none, I believe,' said Stanmore, miad. and there was a sense of vague dis- asceti ism. appointmert in his heart. He knew Belle did not love him, and this knowledge was not pleasant.

> 'But it is not that poor lad,' he thought. 'I wonder it Lucy knows more than I do?' them both, and even when they were driv- do. in, to dine at Hurst on the day Belle had fixed neith r spoke of bim.

A small purty had assembled to meet them in the beau i ul old-tashioned drawing toom at Hurst, when they arrived there. Lady Probyn, stately and gracious as usual, received them with gentle courtesy, but as mistsking the eager pleasure and happiness so plainly written in Sir Dick's expression. The Stanmores had arrived rather late, and their young host had shown unmistakable ward to welcome them, and his mother suppressed a sigh as he watched him.

All those present knew Stanmore, but Belle was a comparative stranger amongst her new country neighbours. Sir Dick voice. soon claimed his undoubted right to take the bride in to dinner, and a pair of pretty grey eyes saw him offer his arm to Belle. with a certain vague feeling of jealously she could not account for.

These pretty gray eyes belonged to Amy Trelawney, the only daughter of the Vicar of Hurst. She had known Dick Probyn all her life, and he and her two soldiers brothers | fancy it would grow very monotonous to had teen chums and companions from their boyhood to their yourg manhood. The Vicar-the Rev. Richard Trelawney-had been Dick Probyn's tutor for many years, as his mother would never part with him to blue sky unclouded, with a light fresh go to a public school. And gradually- smiling. 'I am like a child, always wantbreeze rustling through the trees, by which unconsciously to herself-there had grown ing a new toy.'

'You are very sentimental. Sir Richard.' At this moment, however, Lady Probyn put an end to the conversation. She brought up and presented to Belle the Rev. Richard Trelswny, the Vicar of Hurst, and his daughter, Amy. The Rev. Richard was a man of strong personality. He held with S'r Di k were still rankling in his broad views, yet lived a life of almost rigid

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'I fear myself.' he once said to a soul friend. And these words were the key. note to his character. But at all events he had "fought the good fight,' and lived a blameless and doub'e life. His daughter And when Stanmore next saw Belle he almost worshipped him. and his soldier sons made no further allusion to Sir. Dick. It came to him in their troubles, and trusted was indeed a subject tacitly avoided by bim, as the children of a good man should

> 'We can't expect old heads on young shoulders,' he would tell his friend Lady Probyn : 'our boys have all their tollies ; wisdom will come to them with years.'

He bowed gravely when he was introduced to Belle, and looked with his compassionate grey eyes on her fair face. He her eyes quitted Belle's charming face, she too had noticed at dinner the eager looks looked at her son. Alas! there was no of admiration with which his ex-pupil had regarded her; and had sighed, thinking of the poor lad's probable disappointment and pain. He remembered when a similar temptation had once assailed his own soul. signs of restlessness and uneasiness until and his terrible struggles with an infatuation they came. Now he went quickly fore- he seemed powerless to resist. The woman he had loved never knew it, but it made the Vicar feel very pitiful for her son.

'And how do you like our neighbourhood ?' he asked in a sweet-toned serious

'I think Hurst is a charming place,' answered Belle, 'and Redver's Court is a fine old house, but I have seen very little of the country round,'

'You are not used to country life, I suppose?' said the Vicar.

Belle smilingly shook her head.

'No, I have never lived for long in it ; I

'You like excitement?' 'Yes, I am afraid I do.'

'Yet you will weary of it.'

'I weary of everything,' said Belle, still

my son I should warn you against myself.

'Why do you chaff me, Lady Stanmore ?'

'I am not chaffing you. But it strikes me it is rather warm standing here in the

She put her basket, filled wi h the lovely

summer breeze.

'This is a pleasant change,' said Belle,

'But so-so much better.'

learned to love him. Sir Dick and Lady Probyn call upon them and invite them to dine at Hurst.

CHAPTER XVIII -FLAYING WITH FIRE. Sir Dick grows more in love with Lord Stanmore's wite which causes h s mother much uneasitiess. Lord Stammore also notices the young man's infatuation and warns Belle against encouraging him. They dine at Hurst and Belle is presented to Mr. Trew-laney the vicar and Sir Dicks old tutor, and his and pleasure. daughter Amy who has known and loved Sir Dick Probyn from his boyhood as they have grown up together but who only regards Amy with a sist riy

## CHAPTER XVI. - Continued.

"So you are going to marry Staumore?" she said, holding out her hand. "Well, Belle, it's the very best think you can do. and I am very glad."

"I thought you would be pleased," answered Belle, smiling, but with ever so faint a touch of bitterness in her tone.

"I am very pleased-and your Aunt Lucy says she supposes it will be soon." "They can settle it," replied Belle, with

apparent carelessness; and then she went to the window of her mother's room and stood looking cut on the misty park.

What matter did it make, she was thinking, whether it was soon or late-it it had to be?

She sighed restlessly, and her mother heard the sigh.

'You are a most lucky girl, Belle,' she said, with her usual want of taste.

'I suppose so,' answered Belle, turning of her visitors was Lady Probyn. This round and looking at her mother's face. 'But I doubt very much whether Stanmore can be called a lucky man.'

'You must do your best to show your gratitude to him."

'But I have none. What do you suppose he is marrying me tor? Merely because I am good-looking '

'There are hundreds of good-looking girls in the world.'

'Then I must be his style of good looks,' said Belle, with a little laugh. 'Everyone to their taste, you know."

Mrs. Wayland was about to make an angry retort, but she remembered in time | sighed. 'I pray God he may always be as that Belle would soon be Lady Stanmore he is now. I ought to thank you and Lord and have a great deal in her rower to be-S'anmore for being so good to him stow.

'Stanmore is rich,' she said after a little pause.

'That's a blessing. Poverty is an odious thing; it drags people down; it degrades them.

'Well, you'll have no more poverty at all events. You must persuade Stanmore to go to Monte Carlo, Belle, before the winter is over, and I should not mind join- ent to Lady Stanmore? For the first time ing you there. In the spring of course, in his life she wished he would not come you'll be presented.'

'I hope I'll do honour to my new hou<sup>ati</sup>urs,' rep'ied Belle lightly. 'Well, 'Well, | ered, his mother thought, the moment her good bye for the present, mother; I am going out to drive with Stanmore.'

Belle nodded her head as she said this. and the first enquires he made was after the and left the room, and a quarter of an hour later she was sitting by Stanmore's side in a high open platon which he was driving.

## CHAPTER XVII.- THE ICE WOMAN.

When the season wanted Stanmore and Belle went down to Redver's Court.

'And yet you've had what women like

best, plenty of admiration,' answered Stanmore.

evening at the end of June, in the balcony gown had moved, and fastened them in his Discid Sir Dick was only too happy to accept | here Belle dismissed him. atterwards. of their house in Park Lane, watching coat. Lady Lee saw the action, but Belle 'I must say good-bye, now,' she said, ease Amy said nothing more, but when she her invitation. When he was with her a somewhat listlessly the carriages passing did not, yet when they entered the lighted It was a beautiful summer morning, and was gone Lady Probyn sat still, thinking strange exhilaration seemed to steal over holding out her hand. 'I have a letter to drawingroom she noticed the green spray sadly and seriously of her words. Should below. when Sir Dick ( rrived at the Court he saw him, and he lived a new life that her write to Lady Stanmore in time for the 'There is such a sameness about every-Belle in the grounds. She was dressed in presence made beautiful. Stanmore noticed he had not worn at dinner. last post. Tell Lady Probyn we shall be she speak to her boy, she was asking herthing,' continued Belle, 'that it soon white, and had been cutting flowers, a large his animation at lunch, his fervid. admiring charmed to dine at Hurst on Friday, and 'Did one of the fairies give you that ?' self ; warn him of the danger into which ceases to interest one.' she asked, looking at the rose leaves in his basket of which she was carrying. Sir. looks. He did not fear for Belle, but for the he was plunging so recklessly? But would this be wise? Lady Probyn knew enough thank you for my row.' 'My dear, you are hot and tired, and coat. Dick hesitated a moment, and then gave young man, to whom he knew she was in-She smiled and turned away, but as she therefore misenthropical,' said Stanmore, 'No, but a fairy touched it as she passed,' his horse to a groom, and without entering walked towards the house there was a cerof his warm impetuous nature to fear it different. laying his hand on her shoulder; 'I also the house went into the gardens to join her. teel somewhat in the same vein, but I ex- She looked round when she heard his he answered ; 'I shall always keep it.' But with the waywardness that was now might do but harm. tain uneasiness in her heart, and Stanmore's She looked round when she heard his footstep on the gravel, and then stopped, smiled and held out her hand. 'Fairy gifts are not lucky, you know,' 'She does not care for him,'she presently words regarding Sir Dick recurred to her pect my dinner will put me all right; I wish Lucy would come said Belle. decided ; 'that is his safeguard.' 'Are they not? I think this fairy's gifts But this was a safeguard which he either 'I hope this foolish young man is not would be. did not or would not see.

sometimes did, that my mother sent me reached that stately home, just as the setover expressly to esk what day you will ting sun was flocding with golden light the give us the pleasure of dining with u.?' wide-spreading park, the noble trees, the 'It is very good of Lady Probyn, and I glowing flower beds in all their summer shall be d-lighted to go to Hurst again,' prime, Belle looked round with admiration replied Belle.

What day will come then?' 'What a lovely old place this is, Stan-'Wait till we go in, and see Stanmore,' said Belle; he may have some engagement 'I am glad you like your hom', little I do not know of."

As she spoke she took off the broad-'Yes, it is beautiful, replied Belle. and brimmed straw bat the was wearing, and she suppressed the sigh that rose unhidden shook back the brown curls on her brow. Never had she looked so lovely! The sun. For her memory had travelled back to g!'n ing through the green boughs above her first visit to Redver's Court: to the her, tell on her sweet face; the heat had chill, misty, au'umnal days, when she had flushed her smooth cheeks. Poor Sir walked in these gardens, beneath the fast-Dick! He sat entranced, gazing at the talling leaves, and thought fondly of Hugh charming profile turned a little away from Gilbe t. How light her heart had teen him, for a sudden tancy had seized Belle, then; how full of love and hope! A and she began fastening some of the beau shadow now lay athwart her soul ; a strange titul deep-tinted roses from her basket into her hat, with deft white fingers. 'I am as they have made me,' she told

'Don't they look smart?' she asked smiling. 'I ought to be going to a garden party instead of sitting alone under a tree with you!'

was her nature to be courteous and kind to 'And---which would you like best?' those around her, and in her new position asked Sir Dick almost breathlessly. she had, of course, many opportunities of

Bell looked archly round at the young showing this. All Stanmore's country man's earnest face. neighbours at once called on her after her 'How can I answer such a question?' arrival at the Court, and among the first she said. 'It would be the rudest thing for a hostess to say I should prefer the garden Lady, however, looked at her a little anxparty, and I fear it would flat'er you too iously. She was in truth afraid for her much to tell you I like best being here son. But Belle spoke of Sir Dick with with you.'

'If I thought- ' began Sir Dick; but luckily at this moment a step was heard approaching on the gravel, and the scent

ot a cigar came watting in the air. 'He is coming the beginning of next week,' answered Lady Probyn, with a 'Here is Stanmore I suppose,' said Belle. He is always smoking.'

Stanmore did not look particularly pleased when he saw the two sitting under the big tree, Belle bareheaded, with her flower-decked hat on her lap. But he received Sir Dick kindly enough.

'Well, Dick,' he said, holding out his hand, and how are you this fine day?"

'Sir Dick rose nervously to respond to his saluation, and Stanmore languidly sat down by tis wife's side. 'Sir Richard has come over to ask us to dire at Hurst, Stanmore,' said Belle. 'We have to fix our own day, but I told him I would wait until I saw you.'

manner haunted her. Was this a woman 'Quite a puttern wile,' answered Stanmore, a little sarcastically though he was smiling as he spoke. I thought wives now-a days made their own engagements without ever consulting the unfortunate

man. Sit down, Dick. Well, it's very good of you and Lady Probyn to ask us." 'Only-too deligh ed to see you,' stammered Sir Dick.

'I wish I had fixed the day myself instead of being sneered at as a pattern wite,' said Belle, b ightly, going on arranging the Stanmore, I will. Sir Richard, we shall be ity of rending us. very happy to dine with you and Lady Probyn the day after tomorrow-that will be Friday, won't it ?'

Stanmore slightly shrugged his shoulders. 'Yes, that will be Friday,' he said.

the sheet of water at Redver's Court was almost surrounded. Belle still wore her white dress and her flower-decked hat. She would have been a picturesque and cha'm'ng figure in any man's eyes, but to Sir Dick she was more beautiful than anything that lived. He was simply worshipping her as he sat there fixed on her changetul tace

> For one of Belle's charms was the constant variation of her expression. Every thought seemed to flit over her sensitive lips, and shine in her hazel eyes. She had drawn off her gloves, and was idly amusing herselt by dipping her slender fingers and hand in the lake, and watching the wateron which the sunbeams shone-drip from her fair palm.

'Look, the drops are like diamonds,' she said

'Do you like diamonds?' asked Sir Dick. 'I thought I did till I got them,' answered Belle, smiling; 'now I don't think I dosnch is buman nature !'

'That goes not always hold good.'

'Mostly, at least ; we pine and sigh over the unattainable. Sir Dick could not restrain a restless

'We are strange beings,' continued Belle

we drift to our fate and can't help ourselves; I wonder it the stars have anything to do with it?"

'Nc--we can't help ourselves,' answered Sir Dick, in a low tone.

Belle still kept dipping her hand in the water' and Sir Dick rested idly on his cars. They were both silent for a tew moments, and then Bell said suddenly, looking up: 'There are no mermaids, I suppose, in

lakes ?' 'I never heard of any,' replied Sir Dick, with a little laugh.

'There is a sort of fascination in the idea of a mermaid. I think,' continued Belle, smiling; 'luring the unfortunate mariners down to the deep sea; I wish one would put up her golden head now.'

'And would she lure you in'o the water?' 'No, she wouldn't try to lure me, she would try to lure you; and as you disappeared I should be stranded, as I can't row.'

"I would take many mermaids to lure me from where I am now,' answered Sir Dick, with an impassioned ring in his voice.

like two children. Let us talk sensibly tell me the last new scandal in town.'

who are above and beyond them ?"

answered Belle, more gravely, for there was something in the young man's tone that frightened her. 'It's best to avoid them; let us tear our neighbors to pieces

good to me, mother. I must ride over and 'I am a little weary of it all,' she told call upon them tomorrow, and we must ask Sir Dick obeyed her without a word. 's shall look forward to Friday, then. her husband the night before they left said to Lady Lee. them to dinner!' 'He knew her before her marriage, you Mother, I know will be delighted to see you He would fain have stayed on the sunlit Lidy Lee assented ; and as Belle moved know,' answered Lady Probyn, the ring of 'Is it not rather soon ?' water the whole alternoon, fanning the both,' eagerly answered Sir Dick. up between the flowers, her white dress pain deepening as she spoke ; 'then he 'On ! no; I owe them lots of dinners. flame that already burned so strong y in 'And now it's luncheon time, isn't ?' said accidentally touched a rose tree. In a met them at Monte Carlo when she was on So Sir Dick rode over the next morning Belle rising, and replacing her hat : 'and his heart for this beautiful woman, but her moment Sir Dick, who was tollowing her, her wedding tour, and they were very kind to Redver's Court, and his mother watched | I hope you will give us the pleasure of your | will was law to him, and in silence he They were standing together on a sultry him go. But her face was not quite so company to lunch, Sir Richard ?' stcoped down and plucked the leaves her to him, and in town during the season rowed back to the Janding-place. But

up in Amy Trelawney's heart a warmer attachment to Dick Probyn than circumstances warranted. For on Sir Dick's standing near her. part it was totally unreturned. He liked romped with-in his childhood, but he had never dreamed of love in connection with her name. And to do Amy justice she made no sign of her own feelings. They had been "Dick" and "Amy" to each anger in her tone she could not suppress. other always, and "Dick" and "Amy" they remained. But a subtle difference had stolen into the girl's heart, and the

whole being. Ard again and again. as the dinner went on, she locked at Sir Dick's face. Never before had she seen on it the expression there was now. It was lit up as it were with the deep strong feelings of his heart. and had scarcely heard the Vicar's words. His blue eyes wers shining as they had never shone on poor Amy, and there was that nameless gladness, that sweetness of content, which the presence of those we

touch of Sir Dick hand now thrilled her

love only gives.

It was a revelation to Amy Trelawney; a shock. Brought up in a country village; reared in the household of a somewhat stri t father and mother, the idea that Sir Dick had any strong regard for another | day?' answered Amy Trelawney balt shyly. man's wife filled Any with absolute consternation. True, echoes from a world that was all new to her, since her brothers | teel sorry for poor people.' she added, had joined the Army had occasionally reached her ears. But that Dick Probyn, tte good son, the bright-faced companion of her girl-hood, should so far forget him-

selt seemed actually impossible. ears for anyone else at the table, but the charming white-clad figure by his side. Other un asy g'ances were also directed at the young host. Lady Probyn could scarcely conceal her uneasiness as she | for Dick-he is play ng with fire. looked at her son's face. He was drifting into a terrible danger she telt; into the pittalls of a passion to which there could true : Dick Probyn had been playing with be no honourable end.

And when the men rejoined the ledies in the drawing-room after dinner it was the same thing. It chanced to be a moonlight night, and the white beams were streaming which opened from one end of the room. Belle and a Lady Lee, another guest, went among the fragrant flowers, for which Lady Probyn was famous, and Sir Dick's eyes no

What a glorious night it is. Lady Stan more,' he said, addressing Belle : wouldn't it be jolly to have a walk round the garden -like we once had ?' he added in a lower

But Belle smilingly shook ber head. 'No, we must leave the garden for the tavs and the tairies to disport themselves in tonight.' she answered. 'I suppose they always have a ball in the moonlight ?' Sir Dick laughed.

'Let us go and see,' he urged. But Belle refused ; perhaps she had seen the expression of Lady Probyn's face at dinner, and had not quite forgotten Stanmore's warning words.

·Shall we go back into the room ?' she

'Please do not say that. Lady Stanmore,' pleaded Sir Dick, who was still

'You know it is true,' she answered. the little girl he had played with-nay often | Thon she turned to Miss Trelawney, and addressed ner graciously.

'And you like country life. I suppose ?' 'I have always been accustomed to it." answered Amy Trelawnev, with a touch of 'The daughter of a country parson has no choice,' said the Vicar, kindly; 'and my

girl here is as good as a couple of curates to me. She does half the parish work.' 'Oh, no, father !' answered Amy, and

then her grey eyes stole to Sir Dick's face to see it her father's praise was pleasant to his ears. But there was no answering look. Sir Dick was not thinking of her, But Lady Probyn had.

'That is quite true Amy,' she said 'I do not know what we would do without you at Hurst

'And do you visit the poor ?' asked Belle. looking with some interest at the girl's face. 'If you do, may I give you some money to give them?

'Perhaps you would come with me some 'No,' said Belle, 'but anything you want I shall gladly give you. I always 'though rich people are often poor too.' 'You mean in happiness?' asked the Vicar, with the k en intuition which was part of his nature.

'Yes,' replied Belle, quickly, and then Yet there was Sir Dick with no eyes, no | she turned away, and moved to a different part of the room, and Mr. Trelawney's thoughtful eyes followed her as she did so. 'She h s some secret griet,' he thought, which she is trying to forget; but I fear

A week or so after this dinner party at Hurst, the Vicar's presentiment became fire, and the flim + had scorched his soul. CHAPTER XIX.

A MOTHER'S PRAYER.

Amy Trelawney often went to Hurst Hall, and would sit for hours with Lady down on the glass root of the conservatory, Probyn. She had done this when she was a little girl. when her own mother was alive; and she did it now in her young womanhood. She never even told herself her secret attraction to the place; and sooner perceived this than he joined them if Lady Probyn was not blind to it, she also was quite retigent on the subject.

But on the morning after Belle had dined at Hurst, Lady Probyn ro iced a new restlessness in the girl's manner. Amy generally brought her work, for her de't fingers were nearly always fully employed. But to-day she moved about the morningroom, as it it were impossible for her to be still. Ard presently she spoke ot Belle.

'L dy Stanmore is very pretty,' she said. 'Yes,' replied Lady Probyn, with a ring of paia in her voice ; 'it is certainly a charming face, though I do not know whether I care very much for her manner ; it is too ---- too careless."

'Dick seems to know her very well, and to admire her very much,' continued Amy Trelawney, nervously.

Belle gave a light laugh.

'What have we to do with scandals-

'No one is above and beyond them,'

flow rs in her hat. 'Well, to punish you, by all means, but give them no opportun-

Wby do you talk thus, Lady S'anmore ?' 'You mean in such a worldly tashion ? Did I not tell you that I am one of its children? But row in now, Sir Ri hard; I am getting a little tired."

'What tolly we are taking,' she said,