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HER PROMISE TRUE

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"A Man's Privilege," etc.

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CHAPTER I.—HUGH GILBERT AND BELLE WAYLAND are bidding each other good-bye at Brighton as he is about to sail for India with his regiment. Belle promises to be true and agrees to meet him there for a final farewell. Upon her return to the hotel, where she and her mother are stopping, she finds that Lord Stanmore, whose brother was the husband of Mrs. Wayland's sister, has arrived and has invited her mother and her to dine with him that evening. Mrs. Wayland goes, but Belle feels sudden illness and is left apparently asleep in her room. 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.

CHAPTER II.—Lady Stanmore comes to Brighton and has an important interview with Mrs. Wayland in which they decide Belle's future. Lady Stanmore reads a letter from Gilbert to Belle and lays her plan accordingly. She decides to interfere in the letters between the lovers. Lord Stanmore becomes deeply interested in Belle and invites his sister-in-law, Mrs. Wayland, and Belle to spend a few weeks at his country residence.

CHAPTER III.—Belle begins a diary in order that she may send an account of each day to her absent lover.

CHAPTER IV.—Lady Stanmore thinks over the situation. She decides that Belle is in love with Jack. Lord Stanmore, who is a very rich man, and invites them to visit him at Hurst Hall. He is greatly smitten with Belle. Lady Stanmore sends a letter from Hurst Hall to Belle and tells her that she is to be married to him.

CHAPTER V.—Lord Stanmore becomes jealous of Sir Dick. Belle tells Lady Stanmore of the engagement, and that lady ridicules the idea. They go to Hurst Hall.

CHAPTER VI.—Belle's diary continued. She tells Lady Stanmore of her dream about Hugh. That lady decides to write Mr. Balfour.

CHAPTER VII.—Lady Stanmore destroys a letter Belle has written to Hugh. Jack Stanmore confesses his love for Belle to his sister-in-law. Mrs. Wayland falls ill and the stay at Redvers Court is prolonged. Sir D. K. Probyn proposes to Belle and is refused. Lady Stanmore gets a letter from Mr. Balfour, who writes to her that he contains the startling news of Hugh Gilbert's marriage to Miss Vane. Belle is told the news and is greatly shocked. She takes a morning walk and breaks through the ice.

CHAPTER VIII.—Mrs. Wayland's illness. Mrs. Wayland, as a rule was the most disabbling old woman in the world, but at this time she did exactly what her sister, Lady Stanmore, wished her to do. That is, she took a serious illness, and was compelled to remain many weeks at Redvers Court, whether she wished it or not.

She had, in truth, by some means or other, contracted rheumatic fever, and it not in absolute danger was really extremely ill. And she was the most impatient of invalids. She declared it was the damp of the falling leaves at Redvers Court that had done the mischief, and I rated her sister and Belle every hour of the day for having taken her there.

Lady Stanmore, however, bore it all very complacently, and Stanmore, who never saw her—more complacently. But he also was secretly pleased at this illness, the illness that detained Belle Wayland under his roof.

The letter which poor Belle had written to her lover with such over-flowing tenderness in her heart, we may be very sure never left Redvers Court on its way to Bombay. A few minutes after Belle returned to her mother's room, Lady Stanmore also descended to the hall—though this was not her usual practice—carrying some letters in her hand. She, too, unlocked the letter-bag, placed her own letters within it, and drew out one addressed in Belle's handwriting to

Hugh Gilbert Esq.,
Royal Lancashire Regiment,
General Post Office,
Bombay,
India.

Lady Stanmore carried this letter in the pocket of her dress to her own room, quite unaware that the butler Jenkins, who had charge of the bag, and was just going to lock it before giving it to the postman, had seen her abstract it. Jenkins saw this, but he had lived at Redvers Court in Lady Stanmore's time, and knew it was as much as his place was worth to say anything about it. He had known Lady Stanmore take letters from the bag before, and he knew also that his lady had a determined will and an iron hand.

"I wonder what she is up to now," thought Jenkins, and that was all. In the meanwhile the poor little love-letter, full of the tender couple's love, was consumed in the flames. For a moment or two after she had reached her own room, Lady Stanmore thought she would open it, and read its contents. But after a brief indecision she determined not to do this.

"The old story, the old folly, I suppose she reflected, and she flung it into the fire, and watched it burn quickly away. And at lunch she met Belle without once thinking she had done her own wrong.

"I forgot to ask you," she said, "if you had written your letter and sent it away?"

"Yes," answered Belle, softly, "it is gone," and for the moment the memory of her dream came back to her mind.

"May I ask?" inquired Stanmore, who had heard the question and answer, "what was the nature of this important letter?"

"Jack, of course, thinks it must be a love letter," answered Lady Stanmore, gaily. "But for once, my dear Jack, you are wrong. It is something much more important—a business letter."

"Why should I think it a love letter?" asked Stanmore, sharply.

"Because all girls have them," said Lady Stanmore, coolly; "but, of course, you know nothing about it."

Stanmore made no answer. He was very quiet during lunch, but when Belle left the table to see after her mother, he suddenly looked in his sister-in-law's tier, while a dusky flush passed over his own.

"Lucy, would you think I was a very great fool?" he said, "if I were to tell you that I believe I am half in love with that girl?"

"With Belle?" asked Lady Stanmore, slowly.

"Yes, with Belle; I know it's folly, but I can't help it."

"I do not see that it is folly," continued Lady Stanmore still slowly, and as it were, she was thinking. "Belle is a very pretty girl and I suppose some day you will marry?"

"I never thought of doing so until I met Belle Wayland. But do you think she would have me if I asked her?"

"That I cannot answer. But one piece of advice—if you are in earnest—let me give you. Don't be in a hurry; your rank

or your wealth will not influence Belle. You must try to make her care for you for your own sake."

"I like her all the better for that. But suppose in the meantime someone else cuts me out? That young Dick Probyn, for instance."

"I don't think Belle is a girl to care for so young a man as Dick Probyn."

"But she is so young."

"That is different; and, joking apart—pray don't think I am flattering you, Jack—but you are a much better looking man than Dick Probyn; besides that unfortunate stammer of his."

Stanmore smiled well pleased.

"I must say that's a bit of a drawback," he said. "So you think I had better wait, Lucy?"

"Decidedly wait. If Belle thought we wanted her to marry you because you are what is called a good match, she would not have you. But if she learned to care for you she would."

"And you will stand my friend?"

"Certainly I will, Jack. I like Belle, and I've always liked you. And naturally I shall be pleased to be doubly connected with you."

"The old woman is the worst of it."

"She has proved a most convenient old woman at the present time," answered Lady Stanmore, with a little laugh. "Her being laid up here gives you an opportunity of seeing Belle intimately which you could not have had now or else."

"And you think I had better wait?"

"Most certainly I do; wait until I give you a hint that it is time to speak, and then you will speak to some purpose."

Stanmore nodded his head, and then went to smoke.

"Lucy is a wise woman," he thought as he walked slowly up and down the long avenue. "I'm glad I've told her."

CHAPTER IX.—SIR DICK'S LETTER.

Mrs. Wayland lay ill for weeks and weeks at Redvers Court after this momentous conversation between Stanmore and his sister-in-law. And during this time Sir Dick Probyn rode many times from Hurst to inquire after her, and made some excuse or other for constantly appearing at the Court, and Stanmore regarded these visits with jealous eyes.

"That boy is always coming here," he said crossly one day, when Sir Dick's thoroughbred appeared, as usual, in the now almost leafless avenue.

"Never mind," answered Lady Stanmore, to whom this remark was addressed; "he comes on a useless errand."

"But are you so sure, Lucy?"

"As sure as I can be of anything mundane; but there is always a little uncertainty in our affairs, you know."

Still Stanmore did not like it, and he would have liked it still less had he known the determination in the "boy's" heart to see her that day up to the entrance to the Court.

Sir Dick had in fact made up his mind to ask Belle Wayland to be his wife. His admiration had ripened during the weeks that had passed away since he had first seen her into a deep, and he believed an enduring love, and his most earnest wish now was to find an opportunity of telling her this, and of winning from her sweet lips the words he most longed to hear.

Belle naturally could not be ignorant that he liked her with no common regard. And she liked him well enough to be sorry this was so. She did not wish to give him pain, and she more than once thought of asking her Aunt Lucy to tell him of her engagement to Hugh Gilbert. But fear of Lady Stanmore's ridicule deterred her. She remembered what she had said on the subject once before, and as Lady Stanmore made no comments on Sir Dick's frequent visits, she thought it best also not to speak of them.

In the meanwhile she had written at least three letters to await Hugh Gilbert's arrival at Bombay. But none of these ever went any further than the post-bag at Redvers Court. Lady Stanmore had, indeed, come to a private arrangement with Jenkins, the butler, on the subject, and the post-bag was now never despatched without being first inspected by her. She paid the man highly for this service, and Jenkins was too discreet to require her motive. Perhaps he thought it was other than it was, and Lady Stanmore did smile a little scornfully at the address of some of the letters that passed through her hands. But she did not interfere with them, and she knew that Hugh Gilbert could not write to Belle at Redvers Court, as he did not know she was there; and she knew also that any letters addressed to Belle at Brighton would be forwarded to the Court under cover to herself.

So Belle's pretty love lines lived but a brief space, and then like the first one vanished in the flames. Lady Stanmore did not read them.

"Why should I?" she told herself; but perhaps even she, with all her hardness, scarcely liked to pry on words which she knew were written from the girl's heart.

But her scruples—if she had any—did not extend to a certain letter which presently came to her from Brighton, enclosing an address to Miss Wayland, and bearing the Aden post-mark. She knew at once that it was written by Hugh Gilbert, on his outward passage, and she very deliberately opened it.

"I may write something of consequence," she thought.

But it was only of the old sweet theme of love. And he dwelt on her promise to him.

"I have no fear of you, my dearest Belle," he wrote; "distance, indeed, seems nothing to me as I write this; I feel almost as if you were near to me now. We touch at Aden tomorrow, and there I shall post this letter, and hope to find one or more awaiting me from you on my arrival at Bombay. So it will not be long now until I touch the paper that your hand has

touched; until I kiss the words that you have written."

There was more in this strain; it was a letter from a man to one of whose love he was sure; a letter written from heart to heart, but it did not turn Lady Stanmore over for her purpose.

One part of it she did read twice over, in which Gilbert alluded to his travelling companions, Mrs. Balfour and Miss Vane. "They are both nice women," she read, "and I hope I have been of some little use to them;" that was all. But Lady Stanmore pondered on these words, smiled, and then the letter met the same fate as poor Belle's.

The letter from Sir Dick had ridden to Redvers Court, determined to ask Belle to be his wife, and when Stanmore had scowled when he saw him approach. Gilbert's letter had, however, by this time disappeared in the flames, and Lady Stanmore's smooth and smiling face kept her secrets well. She left Stanmore still scowling in the dining room, where they had just lunched, and went upstairs to the small drawing-room and welcomed Sir Dick very pleasantly.

"I have just come—mother sent me—that is, stammered poor Sir Dick, nervous with his hidden intentions regarding Belle, to ask you."

"Mrs. Wayland?" said Lady Stanmore, considerably, as Sir Dick's speech failed him. "I hope she is a little better today; not in such great pain. Belle is with her, but I shall send her down to talk to you presently. Mrs. Wayland, I am sorry to say, is a very impatient invalid, and likes to have one of us constantly with her, though she has a trained nurse."

"Still—of course—her daughter—" answered Sir Dick in disjointed words, turning scarlet.

"Belle is, I must say, most good to her," continued Lady Stanmore, secretly amused; "but it is a trial for a young girl to sit for hours in a drawing room, and very often get scolded in the bargain. But Mrs. Wayland has not much consideration for other people. I will go to her now and relieve poor Belle. I daresay you would rather talk to her than me?" added Lady Stanmore, with a gracious smile.

Sir Dick stammered out his thanks and then as Lady Stanmore left the room he tried to nerve himself to speak the words he meant to say. But when the door opened, and Belle—sweet and fair—entered the room and advanced smilingly to greet him, Sir Dick found he could say nothing.

He could only nervously grasp her hand, and look with his blue honest eyes at her bright face. Belle was always pretty, but never had she seemed so charming to Sir Dick as she did at this moment. Her brown curls were resting on her white forehead; her hazel eyes were shining, and a smile hovered on her rosy lips, and poor Sir Dick could not find a word to express his feelings!

"Aunt Lucy sent me down to talk to you," said Belle; "mother, I hope, is a little better today."

"I am so glad," gasped Sir Dick, with a great effort. "Lady Stanmore—has been telling me—how good you are."

"Bad you mean?" laughed Belle. "I am a shocking nurse, and my temper is detestable."

"You know it is not," answered the young man, his earnestness almost overcoming his stammer.

"But I know it is! Mother has really suffered dreadfully, yet I hate to hear her groan and moan as she does. It is unnatural, horrid, isn't it, of me? But I can't help it."

"You are only joking."

Yet it hurt him for her even to blame herself. He believed in her so completely. In his eyes she was perfect, and her own dispraise grated on his ears.

"Did you ride over?" presently asked Belle.

"Yes; do you ever ride, Miss Wayland? If you would—ride back to Hurst with me?" Belle shook her head smilingly.

"No, I cannot do that," she answered; "I must go back to mother presently."

"I—I have something to say to you," blurted out Sir Dick, summoning all his courage to his aid.

"What?" asked Belle, brightly.

Sir Dick opened his lips, but the power of articulation seemed to have left him. He gaped, grew scarlet, and an overwhelming sense of humiliation overcame him.

"I—I—I began, but he could proceed no further."

"Tell me some other time," said Belle, kindly. "And now talk to me about your mother. How beautiful she is, Sir Richard."

This at once set Sir Dick at ease, for his mother was a theme he loved to dwell on.

"She is beautiful in my eyes," he said, simply; "and—and I like to hear you praise her."

At this moment, however, Stanmore, who thought it very bad taste of his sister-in-law to leave Sir Dick and Belle alone, entered the room, and Sir Dick felt his opportunity was lost.

Lady Stanmore, who had met Stanmore and had stopped her, went to Mrs. Wayland's room, and had stopped her.

"Is that lad gone?" he said.

"My dear Jack," she answered, "he has just come. I am on my way to send Belle down to entertain him."

Stanmore shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps you had better go and help to entertain him also," suggested Lady Stanmore, smiling. "He looked at me as if he had something very serious to say; and she nodded and passed on."

Stanmore took the hint. He went and talked to Sir Dick and Belle, but he did not ask his young guest to remain, and presently Sir Dick rose to take his leave. Stanmore went to the door with him, and then returned to Belle.

"That young gentleman comes here very often, it seems to me," he said.

"It is something for him to do," replied Belle.

"Do you like him?" asked Stanmore, with his eyes fixed on Belle's face.

"Yes, very much; but what a pity he has such a stammer," answered Belle, and Stanmore saw that no blush rose to her smooth cheeks, and he immediately felt more amiable to Sir Dick.

"Yes, it's confoundingly awkward for him," he said; "but he's a nice boy."

But though Stanmore had interrupted Sir Dick he did not turn him from his purpose.

"What an ass I made of myself, stammering and stammering before her! I was reflecting as he rode home; but I'll not do it any more. I'll write to her and tell her that I love her better than all the world."

And no sooner did he reach Hurst than

he sat down to pen his letter. His words were simple and true, just like his heart, and Belle felt sorry when she read them. Stanmore handed her the letter the next morning at breakfast, and she fancied as he did so he knew the handwriting. Belle opened it and her face flushed a little, but she made no comment, and presently returned it to its envelope.

But when she went to her own room she once more read her letter. It was as follows:—

"Dearest Miss Wayland,—Forgive me for thus addressing you, but I think it is impossible for anyone to see you without loving you. At least it is impossible to me. The first time I saw you I felt this, and I tell it more strongly now. I called to day, to ask you if you would honor me by being my wife. But I got nervous and could not say the words, so now write them. I know I am quite unworthy of you; but I know also that if you will permit me, I will spend all my life in trying to make you happy. My mother will, I am sure, be delighted, and I need not say how happy you will make me by saying one little word. May I call in hopes of hearing it tomorrow? Ever most devotedly yours,

Richard Probyn."

Belle felt really sorry. "I will tell him the truth," she determined, and she did. But even the truth did not soften the blow to Sir Dick's heart.

"Dear Sir Richard," she wrote, "I have just received your letter, and I thank you very much for all the kind things you have written. But I cannot be to you what you wish. I am engaged to be married; was engaged before I saw you, to Mr. Gilbert, of the Royal Lancashire Regiment. He has gone to rejoin his regiment in India, but when he gets his company we shall be married. I am very sorry indeed it gives you pain, and I trust you will always remain my friend."

Yours very sincerely
"Belle Wayland."

CHAPTER XI.—MRS. BALFOUR'S LETTER.

Belle did not tell her Aunt Lucy of Sir Dick's letter, nor her mother. She thought it she did so they would both blame her, and that the old story of her folly about Hugh Gilbert would be renewed. But as the days went by, and Sir Dick did not appear at Redvers Court, Lady Stanmore had a word to say on the subject. "What has become of Dick Probyn, I wonder?" she asked one morning, looking at Belle.

"Did you quarrel with him, Belle, the last time he was here?"

"No Aunt Lucy, I did not," replied Belle; and Lady Stanmore began to speculate about Belle's keeping something back.

But Belle was really counting the days now until there could be a letter from Bombay. She knew that Hugh Gilbert must have arrived there more than a fortnight ago, and she naturally believed that he would find his letters awaiting him. Three weeks after his arrival, if he wrote at once, she could receive an answer, and she felt almost sure that he would write. So she watched Stanmore open the letter bag each morning with eager eyes, and parted lips. But none came, and as morning after morning passed away, a vague fear and disappointment began to grow in her heart.

She knew nothing of a letter that did come to Redvers Court in her lover's handwriting at this time; a letter addressed to her at Brighton, which had been forwarded under cover to Lady Stanmore, and which was opened and read in private by that lady. In this Gilbert expressed great surprise and disappointment that when he landed at Bombay he had found no letter from Belle.

"Writes at once, dearest Belle, when you receive this," he added, "or I shall not know what to think. You would get my letter from Aden? I send these hasty lines to catch the first mail, but I assure you I feel terribly worried not to receive a welcoming word from you."

"Ever yours,
Hugh Gilbert."

Lady Stanmore destroyed this letter also, and though she noticed the eager look on Belle's face each morning, and saw that the girl's cheeks paled, she made no sign. Another week passed, and Belle could scarcely bide her anxiety. She had, of course, dated all her letters to Hugh Gilbert from Redvers Court since her arrival there, and never dreamed that he would write to her at Brighton, nor that he had not received a single line that she had written. At last one morning a letter did come from Bombay, but it was addressed to Lady Stanmore.

"Here's an Indian letter for you, Lucy," said Stanmore, handing it across the breakfast table.

Belle's breast heaved and her face flushed but Lady Stanmore calmly put out her white hand.

"It will be from my friend Mrs. Balfour," she said. "Yes, it is," she added, as she looked at the address. "Well, it will keep," she continued, laying it down by her plate, and going on with her breakfast. "Maud Balfour's letters are always of the longest, and this one, I suppose, will be full of her passage out."

Belle could not control her agitation. She sat there with her eyes fixed on the Indian letter, and with a terrible anxiety gnawing at her heart. But Lady Stanmore never looked at her. The breakfast went on as usual except that Belle's quivering lips could not touch the food. Then, when it was over, Lady Stanmore rose with the utmost composure, and carried away her letter with her.

"Now I must read Maud Balfour's rigmarole," she said, and left the room, and as she did so Stanmore looked over his new paper at Belle's face.

"You have eaten no breakfast, he said. 'Are you not well?'"

"I have a headache," answered Belle nervously.

"Come out and have a ride with me then, and it will take it away. It's a fine morning," continued Stanmore, rising, and going to one of the windows, "with a touch of frost in the air; a ride will do you a world of good."

"No, not this morning," said Belle, almost impatiently, rising also, and moving towards the door. She felt indeed that she could not leave the house until she heard if Mrs. Balfour's letter contained any news. If she mentioned Hugh Gilbert's name!

She was restless and miserable the whole morning, but could not stay there; she passed her Aunt Lucy's room door more than once, but did not go in, as Lady Stanmore disliked to be disturbed.

"But I will ask her after lunch," she decided; but an hour before the lunch-bell

rang Lady Stanmore herself appeared. She rapped at Belle's door, and when she entered the room she was carrying Mrs. Balfour's letter in her hand.

"May I come in?" she said.

"Yes, of course," answered Belle, eagerly. "Aunt Lucy," she continued, almost breathlessly, with her eyes fixed on the letter, "is that from Mrs. Balfour? Does she say anything about—?"

"I have brought the letter to show you," said Lady Stanmore, a little slowly. "It contains some news that I am afraid will startle you, Belle."

"What news?" gasped Belle, and she grew pale to her very lips.

"You remember telling me of your engagement to a Mr. Gilbert, in the Royal Lancashire Regiment? This is Major Balfour's regiment also, and Mr. Gilbert—Hugh Gilbert, I think she calls him," continued Lady Stanmore, referring to Mrs. Balfour's letter, "went out to India with Mrs. Balfour, and a Miss Vane—"

"I know," said Belle, hoarsely. "Well, she refers to him more than once in her letter—let me see—yes, here she writes, 'He is a nice fellow, and has been very useful and attentive to us, though of course, I place this more to Flora Vane's 'beaux yeux' than to my own attractions,' and so on. But here is a postscript, Belle—"

Belle could not speak; her dry lips parted, but she looked mutely in her aunt's face.

"A postscript," continued Lady Stanmore, "which if you were really engaged to this young man, tells a very disagreeable story. I am sorry for you, Belle, but he must be quite unworthy of your regard."

Belle gave a kind of cry, like some wounded animal in deadly pain.

"Must I tell you the gist of it, or shall I read it?" went on Lady Stanmore in not quite so assured accents as before. "But you must hear it, Belle; these are Mrs. Balfour's own words—her postscript."

"I open my letter, dearest Lady Stanmore," proceeded Lady Stanmore, reading from the open letter in her hand, "to tell you a most surprising piece of news. Young Gilbert, of our regiment, who came out with us, is actually married to Flora Vane. We landed on the 19th, and Colonel Vane and my husband were waiting to receive us. Then we went to dine at Colonel Vane's new bungalow on Malabar Hill, which he has furnished so prettily in expectation of his daughter's arrival. At night we went to our own little place, and would you believe it, the very next day Flora Vane ran away with Hugh Gilbert! The affair has created a great sensation, and the Colonel is furious, as he was naturally looking forward to the part enjoyment of his daughter's large fortune—for a time at least. But they have patched it up between them; indeed, it was the only thing that could be done. It is a wonderful piece of good luck for young Gilbert, as I am told that at least Flora's fortune is seventy thousand pounds; and he, I believe, is only the son of a poor clergyman. But he is very good-looking and agreeable, and Flora had quite a right to choose her own husband. The money was left to her by an aunt, for the Colonel himself is comparatively poor. I hear he blames me for not looking after her better on the passage out, but Flora is old enough to take care of herself. She is good-looking, not pretty, but very nice. I have just had a note from her, and she seems very happy."

Thus far Lady Stanmore read, and then she raised her eyes, and stole a look at Belle's face, and the grey pallor of its tint startled her.

"You must not grieve, Belle—she began.

"Let me see the letter," interrupted Belle in a hoarse whisper, and she put out her hand.

"Certainly," answered Lady Stanmore, and Belle clutched it convulsively, and read with dry burning eyes the words to which she had just listened. A faint moan broke from her pallid lips, and a minute or two later the letter fluttered to the floor.

"And I waited day by day, she said, almost below her breath: 'day by day.'"

"The girl's money has proved too great a temptation for him, I suppose," answered Lady Stanmore. "But you must not get away, Belle. Come, my dear, let me see—"

And she laid her hand carefully on the girl's arm.

But Belle pushed her roughly away.

"I want no sympathy—let me alone," she said, and the next moment, before Lady Stanmore could attempt to stop her, she had hurried from the room.

She went swiftly to her own and shut and then locked the door behind her. Her head was in a whirl, and a great blackness and darkness had fallen over her soul. It seemed impossible, and yet with her own eyes she had read of his treachery, and there could be no mistake. She remembered the very words of his letter at this moment; the very words in which he had told her he was going out to India with Mrs. Balfour and Miss Vane. And while she had been waiting and watching, he had been wooing this heiress! A strange bitter laugh broke from her lips; a cold icy chill ran through her frame. Oh! the mockery of it all! Their passionate vows; her promise that no other's lips should rest on hers. And this was the end. This! this!

Again Belle laughed; a mocking cruel laugh, in which her youth died. She shed no tears; her eyes were dry and arid, and her lips parched. Then all her brief love dream passed in shadowy train before her. Their first meeting—when he had told her his heart was his, on the lone country hillside—her parting promise to him ever to be true.

"And he was to make me a good woman," she thought bitterly. "He!"

Presently she heard the luncheon bell ring, but she took no heed of it. She went to the window and stood looking vaguely out on the park; on