

old friend. And I think you are both like and unlike. Your sister has very beautiful eyes"—she lowered her's swiftly—"and hair like yours, but her manner and style were very different. I can no more fancy Bab in your place than I can picture you, Miss Guest, as I saw her for the first time—and on many after occasions," I added, laughing as much to cover my own hardihood as at the queer little figure I had conjured up.

"Thank you," Mr. Herapath," she replied, with coldness, though she had blushed darkly to her ears. "That I think must be enough of compliments for to-night—as you are not an old friend."

Later I stood in the drawing room. I felt alone. Mr. Guest had passed on to others and I stood aside, the sense that I was not one of these people troubling me in a manner as new as it was absurd; for I had been in the habit of rather despising "society." Miss Guest was at the piano, the centre of a circle of soft light, which showed up also a keen-faced, dark-whiskered man leaning over her with the air of one used to the position. Every one else was so fully engaged that I may have looked, as well as felt, forlorn, and meeting her eyes could have fancied she was regarding me with amusement—almost triumph. It must have been mere fancy, bred of self-consciousness, for the next moment she beckoned me to her, and said to her cavalier:

"There, Jack, Mr. Herapath is going to talk to me about Norway now, so that I don't want you any longer. Perhaps you won't mind stepping up to the school-room—Fraulein and Clare are there—and telling Clare that—that—oh, anything."

She did not speak; and I, content to watch the slender hands stealing over the keys would not, until my eyes fell upon her right wrist. She had put off her bracelets and so disclosed a scar upon it, something about which—not its newness—so startled me that I said abruptly, "That is very strange! Pray tell me how you did it?"

She looked up, saw what I meant, and stopping hastily, put on her bracelets; to all appearance so vexed by my thoughtless question, and anxious to hide the mark, that I was quick to add humbly, "I asked because your sister hurt her wrist in nearly the same place on the day when she thought I was in trouble, and the coincidence struck me."

"Yes, I remember," looking at me I thought with a certain suspicion, as though she were not sure that I was giving the right motive. "I did this much in the same way. By falling, I mean. Isn't it a hateful disfigurement?"

No, it was no disfigurement. Even to her, with a woman's love of conquest, it must have seemed anything but a disfigurement had she known what the quiet, awkward man at her side was thinking, who stood looking shyly at it, and found no words to contradict her, though she asked him twice, and thought him stupid enough.

After an interval, "Are you going to the Goldmaces' dance?"

"No," I answered her humbly. "I go out so little."

"Indeed," with an odd smile not too kindly; "I wish

—no I don't—that we could say the same. We are engaged, I think"—she paused, her attention divided between myself and Boccherini's minuet, the low strains of which she was sending through the room—"for every afternoon—this week—except Saturday. By the way, Mr. Herapath, do you remember what was the name Bab told me you teased her with?"

"Wee, bonnie Bab," I answered absently. My thoughts had gone forward to Saturday.

"Oh, yes, wee, bonnie Bab," she murmured softly. "Poor Bab!" and suddenly cut short Boccherini's music and our chat by striking a terrific discord and laughing merrily at my start of discomfiture. Every one took it as a signal to leave.

I went away with something before me—that call upon Saturday afternoon. Quite unreasonably I fancied I should see her alone. And so when the day came and I stood outside the opening door of the drawing-room, and heard voices and laughter within, I was hurt and aggrieved beyond measure. There was quite a party, and a merry one, assembled, who were playing at some game as it seemed to me, for I caught sight of Clare whipping off an impromptu bandage from her eyes, and striving by her stiffest air to give the lie to a pair of flushed cheeks. The black-whiskered man was there, and two men of his kind, and a German governess, and a very old lady in a wheel-chair, who was called "grand-mamma," and Miss Guest herself looking, in the prettiest dress of silvery plush, to the full as bright and fair and graceful as I had been picturing her each hour since we parted.

She dropped me a stately courtesy. "Will you play the part of Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs, Mr. Herapath, while I act honest Burchell, and say 'Fudge!' or will you burn nuts and play games with neighbor Flamborough? You will join us, won't you? Clare does not so misbehave every day, only it is such a wet afternoon and so cold and wretched, and we did not think there would be any more callers—and tea will be up in five minutes."

She did not think there would be any more callers! Something in her smile belied the words and taught me that she had thought—she had known—that there would be one more caller.

It was a simple game enough. One sat in the middle blindfolded, while the rest disguised their own or assumed each other's voices, and spoke one by one some gibe or quip at his expense. When he succeeded in naming the speaker, the detected satirist put on the poke, and in his turn heard things good for his soul's health. Now this rôle unhappily soon fell to me, and proved a heavy one, because I was not so familiar with the other's voices as were the rest; and Miss Guest—whose faintest tones I thought to have known—had a wondrous knack of cheating me, now taking off Clare's voice, and now—after the door had been opened to admit the tea—her father's. So I failed again and again to earn my release. But when a voice behind me cried with well-feigned eagerness, "How nice! Do tell me all about a fire!"