

though no fresh creaking of the door had reached me, nor warning been given of an addition to the players, I had not the smallest doubt who was the speaker, but exclaimed at once, "That is Bab! Now I cry you mercy. I am right this time. That was Bab!"

I looked for a burst of applause and laughter, such as had before attended a good thrust home, but none came. On the contrary, with my words so odd a silence fell upon the room that it was clear that something was wrong, and I pulled off my handkerchief in haste, repeating, "That was Bab, I am sure."

But if it was, I could not see her. What had come over them all? Jack's face wore a provoking smile, and his friends were clearly bent upon sniggering. Clare looked horrified, and grandmamma gently titillated, while Miss Guest, who had risen and half turned away toward the windows, seemed to be in a state of proud confusion. What was the matter?

"I beg every one's pardon by anticipation," I said, looking round in a bewildered way; "but have I said anything wrong?"

"Oh, dear no," cried the fellow they called Jack, with a familiarity that was in the worst taste—as if I had meant to apologise to him! "Most natural thing in the world!"

"Jack, how dare you?" exclaimed Miss Guest, stamping her foot.

"Well, it seemed all right. It sounded very natural, I am sure."

"Oh, you are unbearable! Mr. Herapath, I am sure that you did not know that my name was Barbara."

"Certainly not," I cried. "What a strange thing!"

"But it is, and that is why grandmamma is looking so shocked, and Mr. Buchanan is wearing threadbare an old friend's privilege of being rude. I freely forgive you if you will make allowance for him. And you shall come off the stool of repentance and have your tea first, since you are the greatest stranger. It is a stupid game, after all!"

She would hear no apologies from me. And when I would have asked why her sister bore the same name, and thus excused myself, she was intent upon tea-making, and the few moments I could with decency add to my call gave me scant opportunity. And so I should have gone—but that the door-handle was stiff, and Miss Guest came to my aid as I fumbled with it. "We are always at home on Saturdays, if you like to call, Mr. Herapath," she murmured, and I found myself in the street.

So carelessly she said it, that with a sudden change of feeling I vowed I would not call. Why should I? Why should I worry myself with the sight of those other fellows parading their favor? With the babble of that society chit-chat, which I had so often scorned—and still scorned, and had no part or concern in. They were not people to suit me or do me good. I would not go, I said, and repeated it firmly on Monday and Tuesday; on Wednesday only so far modified it that I thought at some distant time to leave a card—to avoid discourtesy; on Friday preferred an earlier date as wiser and more polite,

and on Saturday walked shamefaced down the street and knocked and rang, and went up stairs—to taste a pleasant misery. Yes, and on the next Saturday too, and the next, and the next; and that one on which we all went to the theatre, and that other one on which Mr. Guest kept me to dinner. Ay, and on other days that were not Saturdays, among which two stand high out of the waters of forgetfulness—days like twin pillars of Hercules, through which I thought to reach, as did the seamen of old, I knew not what treasures of unknown lands stretching away under the setting sun. First, that one on which I found Barbara Guest alone and blurted out that I had the audacity to wish to make her my wife; and then heard, before I had well—or badly—told my tale, the wheels of grandmamma's chair outside.

"Hush!" the girl said, her face turned from me. "Hush, Mr. Herapath. You don't know me, indeed. You have seen so little of me. Please say nothing more about it. You are completely under a delusion."

"It is no delusion that I love you, Barbara!"

"It is, it is," she repeated, freeing her hand. "There, if you will not take an answer—come—come at three to-morrow. But mind, I promise you nothing—I promise nothing," she added feverishly, and fled from the room, leaving me to talk to grandmamma as best and escape as quickly as I might.

"I will tell Miss Guest you are here, sir," the man said, as he opened the door for me the next day. I looked at all the little things in the room which I had come to know well—her work-basket, the music upon the piano, the table-ensel, her photograph, and wondered if I were to see them no more, or if they were to become a part of my every-day life. Then I heard her come in, and turned quickly, feeling that I should learn my fate from her greeting.

"Bab!" The word was wrung from me perforce. And then we stood and looked at one another; she with a strange pride and defiance in her eyes, though her cheek was dark with blushes, and I with wonder and perplexity in mine. Wonder and perplexity that quickly grew into a conviction, a certainty that the girl standing before me in the short-skirted brown dress, with tangled hair and loose neck-ribbon, was the Bab I had known in Norway; and yet that the eyes—I could not mistake them now, no matter what unaccustomed look they might wear—were Barbara Guest's!

"Miss Guest—Barbara," I stammered, grappling with the truth, "why have you played this trick upon me?"

"It is Miss Guest and Barbara now," she cried, with a mocking courtesy. "Do you remember, Mr. Herapath, when it was Bab? When you treated me as a kind of toy, and a plaything, with which you might be as intimate as you liked; and hurt my feelings—yes, it is weak to confess it, I know—day by day, and hour by hour?"

"But surely that is forgiven now?" I said, dazed by an attack so sudden and so bitter. "It is atonement enough that I am at your feet now, Barbara!"

"You are not," she retorted hotly. "Don't say you have offered love to me, who am the same with the child