

not to fall in love with your pretty *protege*. Rather hard lines to put such a temptation in a fellow's way and then forbid him to be tempted. Why mother, I am nine-tenths in love with her now."

"Oh well, if the attack is so sudden and severe it will not last long," replied the lady laughing, but watching the young man covertly from under her long lashes. "I have little fear, however, for the Drapers are quite aristocratic, they stand more on blood than money. My family were much the same. Poor Helen made a dreadful mistake when she married Alfred Mason; but such things will occur. They are all plain people out there, but very kind and hospitable. Mildred's husband seems an excellent man, but there is no style among them."

The youth, concerning whose affections Mrs. Draper was so solicitous, was a tall, well-built fellow with dark, laughing eyes, and a frank good-humored face. He went out of the room humming softly "Those Witching Eyes of Blue," and as the door closed his mother exclaimed half-a-loud: "I hope I have made no mistake in bringing her here. He will surely not let a mere child engross his attention, when he can win such a girl as Caroline Cramer. My heart is set on that match."

Pretty Pet, dressed nicer than she had ever been before, was curled up on a sofa in the library, reading. What a feast all these books were to her, and how she enjoyed everything, only she longed to share all with the home friends.

"Dreaming, cousin?" It was Arthur's voice that broke in upon her. He smiled down into the pink and white face framed in golden curls. "What a mite of a girl you are anyway," he continued as she sat up and made room for him beside her.

"Yes, I'm too small I think. I admire a good figure."

He laughed aloud. "Indeed! so you have your own notions of feminine beauty, eh!"

"Why, of course. Now Aunt Mildred is a very fine looking lady, and Uncle Max says she was a very, very pretty girl."

"Do you like dark people?" inquired the young man much amused at her naive manner.

"Well, yes, if they are men. I don't care much for a dark woman. Auntie isn't dark, but has soft brown hair, and the sweetest gray eyes, and such pretty, restful ways. Don't you think ones way is the main thing?"

"It counts," was the grave rejoinder. "So you like dark men. Do you like me?"

"Why, I don't know you yet; but Aunt Draper said I'd like you. Say, I am sure I'll forget to give my name as Pet Mason, I'm so used to Browning. I wish I had a name of my own that none could make up

drop or change; but I'd rather it was Browning than anything else. But your mother thinks I better say Mason while I'm here. It's funny, I am sure I don't see why."

"I don't either," said Arthur, almost crossly, "but I guess we better let her have her way."

"Oh yes, indeed! she is so kind to me that I am anxious to please her."

"Anybody would be kind to you."

"People always are. You know about my being an ocean baby, don't you? But there! Aunt Draper said I must not tell that here either. Is it a disgrace to be wrecked and cast ashore?"

"Bless your heart child, no. Why you may be a princess born for aught any one knows. I am sure that good blood runs in your veins anyway."

"Aunt Mildred had this ring made of one she had once, I don't know its history but it belonged to, or was given her by, some dear, dead friend, and this lock of hair cut from what must have been my own mother's head, fixed into it. Wasn't that nice of her? And she gave it to me when I was fourteen."

"I am quite in love with this cousin Mildred of mine from hearing you talk, though I think I never saw her."

"She is an excellent woman, and so is grandma."

Perhaps nothing could have been more dangerously captivating for the world-weary man than this fresh, innocent, unselfish conversation.

Mrs. Draper fulfilled her promise to give Pet every advantage, employing a well known English lady to instruct her in music and painting, and a genuine Frenchman for the French and "polish" as she said. M. Le Grand was supposed to be an exiled nobleman of some degree, but as he volunteered no information, and his reticence forbade idle questions, no one really knew the facts in the case; but that he was handsome and polished—a perfect courtier in bearing—none disputed; and despite his poverty many a romantic belle was ready to bestow on him her hand and fortune.

Tender-hearted Pet was sure he had known some great sorrow else there would not be such sad depths in the dark eyes and such undertones of sadness in the musical voice.

"Don't grow sentimental over him child, or I'll dismiss him and engage Madam La Seur," Mrs. Draper cautioned.

"Now you are making fun of me Aunt Celia," the young girl laughed gaily, and then flushed as she noted the earnest gaze of Arthur upon her. What could make him look so grave she wondered, and rarely mentioned Monsieur afterward, why she could not have told.

There was to be a party at the Draper mansion on Pet's gaining her seventeenth year, or on the fifteenth