

things' must keep until to-night, or we shall both be late for dinner."

"All right," said Garth, "all right. But you will come out here this evening, Miss Champion? And you will give me as long as I want?"

"I will come as soon as we can possibly escape," replied Jane; "and you cannot be more anxious to tell me everything than I am to hear it. Oh! the scent of these magnolias! And just look at the great white trumpets! Would you like one for your button-hole?"

He gave her a wistful, whimsical little smile; then turned and went indoors.

"Why do I feel so inclined to tease him?" mused Jane, as she moved from the window. "Really it is I who have been silly this time; and he, staid and sensible. Myra is quite right. He is taking it very seriously. And how about her? Ah! I hope she cares enough, and in the right way. — Come in, Matthews! And you can put out the gown I wore on the night of the concert at Overdene, and we must make haste. We have just twenty minutes. What a lovely evening! Before you do anything else, come and see this sunset on the lake. Ah! it is good to be here!

CHAPTER X

THE REVELATION

ALL the impatience in the world could not prevent dinner at Shenstone from being a long function, and two of the most popular people in the party could not easily escape afterwards unnoticed. So a distant clock in the village was striking ten, as Garth and Jane stepped out on to the terrace together. Garth caught up a rug in passing, and closed the door of the lower hall carefully behind him.

They were quite alone. It was the first time they had been really alone since these days apart, which had seemed so long to both.

They walked silently, side by side, to the wide stone parapet overlooking the old-fashioned garden. The silvery moonlight flooded the whole scene with radiance. They could see the stiff box-borders, the winding paths, the queerly shaped flower-beds, and, beyond, the lake, like a silver mirror, reflecting the calm loveliness of the full moon.

Garth spread the rug on the coping, and Jane sat down. He stood beside her, one foot on the coping, his arms folded across his chest, his head erect. Jane had seated herself sideways, turning towards him, her back to an old stone lion mounting guard upon the parapet; but she turned her head still further, to look down upon the lake, and she thought Garth was looking in the same direction.

But Garth was looking at Jane.

She wore the gown of soft trailing black material she had worn at the Overdene concert, only she had not on the pearls or, indeed, any ornament save a cluster of crimson rambler roses. They nestled in the soft, creamy old lace which covered the bosom of her gown. There was a quiet strength and nobility about her attitude which thrilled the soul of the man who stood watching her. All the adoring love, the passion of worship, which filled his heart, rose to his eyes and shone there. No need to conceal it now. His hour had come at last, and he had nothing to hide from the woman he loved.

Presently she turned, wondering why he did not begin his confidences about Pauline Lister. Looking up inquiringly, she met his eyes.

"Dal!" cried Jane, and half rose from her seat. "Oh, Dal, — don't!"

He gently pressed her back. "Hush, dear," he said. "I must tell you everything, and you have promised to listen, and to advise and help. Ah, Jane, Jane! I shall need your help. I want it so greatly, and not only your help, Jane— but *you* — you, yourself. Ah, how I want you! These three days have been one continual ache of loneliness, because you were not there; and life began to live and move again, when you returned. And yet it has been so hard, waiting all these hours to speak. I have so much to tell you, Jane, of all you are to me — all you have become to me, since the night of the concert. Ah, how can I express it? I have never had any big things in my life; all has been more or less trivial — on the surface. This need of you — this wanting you — is so huge. It dwarfs all that went before; it would overwhelm all that is to come, — were it not that it will be the throne,

the crown, the summit, of the future. — Oh, Jane! I have admired so many women. I have raved about them, sighed for them, painted them, and forgotten them. But I never *loved* a woman before; I never knew what womanhood meant to a man, until I heard your voice thrill through the stillness — 'I count each pearl.' Ah, beloved, I have learned to count pearls since then, precious hours in the past, long forgotten, now remembered, and at last understood. 'Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer,' ay, a passionate plea that past and present may blend together into a perfect rosary, and that the future may hold no possibility of pain or parting. Oh, Jane — Jane! Shall I ever be able to make you understand — all — how much — Oh, *Jane!*"

She was not sure just when he had come so near; but he had dropped on one knee in front of her, and, as he uttered the last broken sentences, he passed both his arms around her waist and pressed his face into the soft lace at her bosom. A sudden quietness came over him. All struggling with explanations seemed hushed into the silence of complete comprehension — an all-pervading, enveloping silence.

Jane neither moved nor spoke. It was so strangely sweet to have him there — this whirlwind of emotion come home to rest, in a great stillness, just above her quiet heart. Suddenly she realised that the blank of the last three days had not been the miss of the music, but the miss of *him*; and as she realised this, she unconsciously put her arms about him. Sensations unknown to her before, *awoke* and moved within her, — a heavenly sense of aloofness from the world, the loneliness of life all swept away by this dear fact — just he and she together. Even as she thought it,

felt it, he lifted his head, still holding her, and looking into her face, said: "You and I together, my own — my own."

But those beautiful shining eyes were more than Jane could bear. The sense of her plainness smote her, even in that moment; and those adoring eyes seemed lights that revealed it. With no thought in her mind but to hide the outward part from him who had suddenly come so close to the shrine within, she quickly put both hands behind his head and pressed his face down again, into the lace at her bosom. But, to him, those dear firm hands holding him close, by that sudden movement, seemed an acceptance of himself and of all he had to offer. For ten, twenty, thirty exquisite seconds, his soul throbbed in silence and rapture beyond words. Then he broke from the pressure of those restraining hands; lifted his head, and looked into her face once more.

"My wife!" he said.

Into Jane's honest face came a look of startled wonder; then a deep flush, seeming to draw all the blood, which had throbbed so strangely through her heart, into her cheeks, making them burn, and her heart die within her.

She disengaged herself from his hold, rose, and stood looking away to where the still waters of the lake gleamed silver in the moonlight.

Garth Dalmain stood beside her. He did not touch her, nor did he speak again. He felt sure he had won; and his whole soul was filled with a gladness unspeakable. His spirit was content. The intense silence seemed more expressive than words. Any ordinary touch would have dimmed the sense of those

moments when her hands had held him to her. So he stood quite still and waited.

At last Jane spoke. "Do you mean that you wish to ask me to be — to be *that* — to you?"

"Yes, dear," he answered, gently; but in his voice vibrated the quiet of strong self-control. "At least I came out here intending to ask it of you. But I cannot ask it now, beloved. I can't ask you *to be* what you *are* already. No promise, no ceremony, no giving or receiving of a ring, could make you more my wife than you have been just now in those wonderful moments."

Jane slowly turned and looked at him. She had never seen anything so radiant as his face. But still those shining eyes smote her like swords. She longed to cover them with her hands; or bid him look away over the woods and water, while he went on saying these sweet things to her. She put up one foot on the low parapet, leaned her elbow on her knee, and shielded her face with her hand. Then she answered him, trying to speak calmly.

"You have taken me absolutely by surprise, Dal. I knew you had been delightfully nice and attentive since the concert evening, and that our mutual understanding of music and pleasure in it, coupled with an increased intimacy brought about by our confidential conversation under the cedar, had resulted in an unusually close and delightful friendship. I honestly admit it seems to have — it has — meant more to me than any friendship has ever meant. But that was partly owing to your temperament, Dal, which tends to make you always the most vivid spot in one's mental landscape. But truly I thought you wanted me out here in order to pour out confidences

about Pauline Lister. Everybody believes that her loveliness has effected your final capture, and truly, Dal, truly — I thought so, too." Jane paused.

"Well?" said the quiet voice, with its deep undertone of gladness. "You know otherwise now."

"Dal — you have so startled and astonished me. I cannot give you an answer to-night. You must let me have until to-morrow — to-morrow morning."

"But, beloved," he said tenderly, moving a little nearer, "there is no more need for you to answer than I felt need to put a question. Can't you realise this? Question and answer were asked and given just now. Oh, my dearest — come back to me. Sit down again."

But Jane stood rigid.

"No," she said. "I can't allow you to take things for granted in this way. You took me by surprise, and I lost my head utterly — unpardonably, I admit. But, my dear boy, marriage is a serious thing. Marriage is not a mere question of sentiment. It has to wear. It has to last. It must have a solid and dependable foundation, to stand the test and strain of daily life together. I know so many married couples intimately. I stay in their homes, and act sponsor to their children; with the result that I vowed never to risk it myself. And now I have let you put this question, and you must not wonder if I ask for twelve hours to think it over."

Garth took this silently. He sat down on the stone coping with his back to the lake and, leaning backward, tried to see her face; but the hand completely screened it. He crossed his knees and clasped both hands around them, rocking slightly backward and forward for a minute while mastering the impulse to

speak or act violently. He strove to compose his mind by fixing it upon trivial details which chanced to catch his eye. His red socks showed clearly in the moonlight against the white paving of the terrace, and looked well with black patent-leather shoes. He resolved always to wear red silk socks in the evening, and wondered whether Jane would knit some for him. He counted the windows along the front of the house, noting which were his and which were Jane's, and how many came between. At last he knew he could trust himself, and, leaning back, spoke very gently, his dark head almost touching the lace of her sleeve.

"Dearest — tell me, didn't you feel just now —"

"Oh, hush!" cried Jane, almost harshly, "hush, Dal! Don't talk about feelings with this question between us. Marriage is fact, not feeling. If you want to do really the best thing for us both, go straight indoors now and don't speak to me again to-night. I heard you say you were going to try the organ in the church on the common at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning. Well — I will come there soon after half past eleven and listen while you play; and at noon you can send away the blower, and I will give you my answer. But now — oh, go away, dear; for truly I cannot bear any more. I must be left alone."

Garth loosed the strong fingers clasped so tightly round his knee. He slipped the hand next to her along the stone coping, close to her foot. She felt him take hold of her gown with those deft, masterful fingers. Then he bent his dark head quickly, and whispering: "I kiss the cross," with a gesture of infinite reverence and tenderness, which Jane never forgot, he kissed the hem of her skirt. The next moment she was alone.

She listened while his footsteps died away. She

heard the door into the lower hall open and close. Then slowly she sat down just as she had sat when he knelt in front of her. Now she was quite alone. The tension of these last hard moments relaxed. She pressed both hands over the lace at her bosom where that dear, beautiful, adoring face had been hidden. Had she *felt*, he asked. Ah! what had she not felt?

Tears never came easily to Jane. But to-night she had been called a name by which she had never thought to be called; and already her honest heart was telling her she would never be called by it again. And large silent tears overflowed and fell upon her hands and upon the lace at her breast. For the wife and the mother in her had been wakened and stirred, and the deeps of her nature broke through the barriers of stern repression and almost masculine self-control, and refused to be driven back without the womanly tribute of tears.

And around her feet lay the scattered petals of crushed rambler roses.

Presently she passed indoors. The upper hall was filled with merry groups and resounded with "good-nights" as the women mounted the great staircase, pausing to fling back final repartees, or to confirm plans for the morrow.

Garth Dalmain was standing at the foot of the staircase, held in conversation by Pauline Lister and her aunt, who had turned on the fourth step. Jane saw his slim, erect figure and glossy head the moment she entered the hall. His back was towards her, and though she advanced and stood quite near, he gave no sign of being aware of her presence. But the joyousness of his voice seemed to make him hers again in

this new sweet way. She alone knew what had caused it, and unconsciously she put one hand over her bosom as she listened.

"Sorry, dear ladies," Garth was saying, "but to-morrow morning is impossible. I have an engagement in the village. Yes — really! At eleven o'clock."

"That sounds so rural and pretty, Mr. Dalmain," said Mrs. Parker Bangs. "Why not take Pauline and me along? We have seen no dairies, and no dairy-maids, nor any of the things in 'Adam Bede,' since we came over. I would just love to step into Mrs. Poyser's kitchen and see myself reflected in the warming-pans on the walls."

"Perhaps we would be *de trop* in the dairy," murmured Miss Lister archly.

She looked very lovely in her creamy-white satin gown, her small head held regally, the brilliant charm of American womanhood radiating from her. She wore no jewels, save one string of perfectly matched pearls; but on Pauline Lister's neck even pearls seemed to sparkle.

All these scintillations, flung at Garth, passed over his sleek head and reached Jane where she lingered in the background. She took in every detail. Never had Miss Lister's loveliness been more correctly appraised.

"But it happens, unfortunately, to be neither a dairy-maid nor a warming-pan," said Garth. "My appointment is with a very grubby small boy, whose rural beauties consist in a shock of red hair and a whole pepper-pot of freckles."

"Philanthropic?" inquired Miss Lister.

"Yes, at the rate of threepence an hour."

"A caddy, of course," cried both ladies together.

"My! What a mystery about a thing so simple!" added Mrs. Parker Bangs. "Now we have heard, Mr. Dalmain, that it is well worth the walk to the links to see you play. So you may expect us to arrive there, time to see you start around."

Garth's eyes twinkled. Jane could hear the twinkle in his voice. "My dear lady," he said, "you overestimate my play as, in your great kindness of heart, you overestimate many other things connected with me. But I shall like to think of you at the golf links at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning. You might drive there, but the walk through the woods is too charming to miss. Only remember, you cross the park and leave by the north gate, not the main entrance by which we go to the railway station. I would offer to escort you, but duty takes me, at an early hour, in quite another direction. Beside, when Miss Lister's wish to see the links is known, so many people will discover golf to be the one possible way of spending to-morrow morning, that I should be but a unit in the crowd which will troop across the park to the north gate. It will be quite impossible for you to miss your way."

Mrs. Parker Bangs was beginning to explain elaborately that never, under any circumstances, could he be a unit, when her niece peremptorily interposed.

"That will do, aunt. Don't be silly. We are all units, except when we make a crowd; which is what we are doing on this staircase at this present moment, so that Miss Champion has for some time been trying ineffectually to pass us. Do you golf to-morrow, Miss Champion?"

Garth stood on one side, and Jane began to mount the stairs. He did not look at her, but it seemed to Jane that his eyes were on the hem of her gown as it trailed past him. She paused beside Miss Lister. She knew exactly how effectual a foil she made to the American girl's white loveliness. She turned and faced him. She wished him to look up and see them standing there together. She wanted the artist eyes to take in the cruel contrast. She wanted the artist soul of him to realise it. She waited.

Garth's eyes were still on the hem of her gown, close to the left foot; but he lifted them slowly to the lace at her bosom, where her hand still lay. There they rested a moment, then dropped again, without rising higher.

"Yes," said Mrs. Parker Bangs, "are you playing around with Mr. Dalmain to-morrow forenoon, Miss Champion?"

Jane suddenly flushed crimson, and then was furious with herself for blushing, and hated the circumstances which made her feel and act so unlike her ordinary self. She hesitated during one long dreadful moment. How dared Garth behave in that way? People would think there was something unusual about her gown. She felt a wild impulse to stoop and look at it herself to see whether his kiss had materialised and was hanging like a star to the silken hem. Then she forced herself to calmness and answered rather brusquely: "I am not golfing to-morrow; but you could not do better than go to the links. Good-night, Mrs. Parker Bangs. Sleep well, Miss Lister. Good-night, Dal."

Garth was on the step below them, handing Pauline's aunt a letter she had dropped.

"Good-night, Miss Champion," he said, and for one

instant his eyes met hers, but he did not hold out his hand, or appear to see hers half extended.

The three women mounted the staircase together, then went different ways. Miss Lister trailed away down a passage to the right, her aunt trotting in her wake.

"There's been a tiff there," said Mrs. Parker Bangs.

"Poor thing!" said Miss Lister softly. "I like her. She's a real good sort. I should have thought she would have been more sensible than the rest of us."

"A real *plain* sort," said her aunt, ignoring the last sentence.

"Well, she didn't make her own face," said Miss Lister generously.

"No, and she don't pay other people to make it for her. She's what Sir Walter Scott calls: 'Nature in all its ruggedness.'"

"Dear aunt," remarked Miss Lister wearily, "I wish you wouldn't trouble to quote the English classics to me when we are alone. It is pure waste of breath, because you see I *know* you have read them all. Here is my door. Now come right in and make yourself comfy on that couch. I am going to sit in this palatial arm-chair opposite, and do a little very needful explaining. My! How they fix one to the floor! These ancestral castles are all right so far as they go, but they don't know a thing about rockers. Now I have a word or two to say about Miss Champion. She's a real good sort, and I like her. She's not a beauty; but she has a fine figure, and she dresses right. She has heaps of money, and could have rarer pearls than mine; but she knows better than to put pearls on that brown skin. I like a woman who knows her limitations and is sensible over them. All the men

adore her, not for what she *looks* but for what she *is*, and, my word, aunt, that's what pays in the long run. That is what lasts. Ten years hence the Honourable Jane will still be what she is, and I shall be trying to look what I'm not. As for Garth Dalmain, he has eyes for all of us and a heart for none. His pretty speeches and admiring looks don't mean marriage, because he is a man with an ideal of womanhood and he can't see himself marrying below it. If the Sistine Madonna could step down off those clouds and hand the infant to the young woman on her left, he might marry *her*; but even then he would be afraid he might see some one next day who did her hair more becomingly, or that her foot would not look so well on his Persian rugs as it does on that cloud. He won't marry money, because he has plenty of it. And even if he hadn't, money made in candles would not appeal to him. He won't marry beauty, because he thinks too much about it. He adores so many lovely faces, that he is never sure for twenty-four hours which of them he admires most, bar the fact that, as in the case of fruit trees, the unattainable are usually the most desired. He won't marry goodness — virtue — worth — whatever you choose to call the sterling qualities of character — because in all these the Honourable Jane Champion is his ideal, and she is too sensible a woman to tie such an epicure to her plain face. Besides, she considers herself his grandmother, and doesn't require him to teach her to suck eggs. But Garth Dalmain, poor boy, is so sublimely lacking in self-consciousness that he never questions whether he can win his ideal. He possesses her already in his soul, and it will be a fearful smack in the face when she says "No," as she assuredly will do,

for reasons aforesaid. These three days, while he has been playing around with me, and you and other dear match-making old donkeys have gambolled about us, and made sure we were falling in love, he has been worshipping the ground she walks on, and counting the hours until he should see her walk on it again. He enjoyed being with me more than with the other girls, because I understood, and helped him to work all conversations round to her, and he knew, when she arrived here, I could be trusted to develop sudden anxiety about you, or have important letters to write, if she came in sight. But that is all there will ever be between me and Garth Dalmain; and if you had a really careful regard for my young affections you would drop your false set on the marble wash-stand, or devise some other equally false excuse for our immediate departure for town to-morrow. — And now, dear, don't stay to argue; because I have said exactly all there is to say on the subject, and a little more. And try to toddle to bed without telling me of which cute character in Dickens I remind you, because I am cuter than any of them, and if I stay in this tight frock another second I can't answer for the consequences. — *Oui, Joséphine, entrez!* — Good-night, dear aunt. Happy dreams!"

But after her maid had left her, Pauline switched off the electric light and, drawing back the curtain, stood for a long while at her window, looking out at the peaceful English scene bathed in moonlight. At last she murmured softly, leaning her beautiful head against the window frame:

"I stated your case well, but you didn't quite deserve it, Dal. You ought to have let me know about Jane, weeks ago. Anyway, it will stop the talk about you

and me. And as for you, dear, you will go on sighing for the moon; and when you find the moon is unattainable, you will not dream of seeking solace in more earthly lights — not even poppa's best sperm," she added, with a wistful little smile, for Pauline's fun sparkled in solitude as freely as in company, and as often at her own expense as at that of other people, and her brave American spirit would not admit, even to herself, a serious hurt.

Meanwhile Jane had turned to the left and passed slowly to her room. Garth had not taken her half-proffered hand, and she knew perfectly well why. He would never again be content to clasp her hand in friendship. If she cut him off from the touch which meant absolute possession, she cut herself off from the contact of simple comradeship. Garth, to-night, was like a royal tiger who had tasted blood. It seemed a queer simile, as she thought of him in his conventional evening clothes, correct in every line, well-groomed, smart almost to a fault. But out on the terrace with him she had realised, for the first time, the primal elements which go to the making of a man — a forceful determined, ruling man — creation's king. They echo of primeval forests. The roar of the lion is in them, the fierceness of the tiger; the instinct of dominant possession, which says: "Mine to have and hold, to fight for and enjoy; and I slay all comers!" She had felt it, and her own brave soul had understood it and responded to it, unafraid; and been ready to mate with it, if only — ah! if only —

But things could never be again as they had been before. If she meant to starve her tiger, steel bars must be between them for evermore. None of those sentimental suggestions of attempts to be a sort of

unsatisfactory cross between sister and friend would do for the man whose head she had unconsciously held against her breast. Jane knew this. He had kept himself magnificently in hand after she put him from her, but she knew he was only giving her breathing space. He still considered her his own, and his very certainty of the near future had given him that gentle patience in the present. But even now, while her answer pended, he would not take her hand in friendship.

Jane closed her door and locked it. She must face this problem of the future, with all else locked out excepting herself and him. Ah! if she could but lock *herself* out and think only of him and of his love, as beautiful, perfect gifts laid at her feet, that she might draw them up into her empty arms and clasp them there for evermore. Just for a little while she would do this. One hour of realisation was her right. Afterwards she must bring *herself* into the problem, — her possibilities; her limitations; herself, in her relation to him in the future; in the effect marriage with her would be likely to have upon him. What it might mean to her, did not consciously enter into her calculations. Jane was self-conscious, with the intense self-consciousness of all reserved natures, but she was not selfish.

At first, then, she left her room in darkness, and, groping her way to the curtains, drew them back, threw up the sash, and, drawing a chair to the window, sat down, leaning her elbows on the sill and her chin in her hands, and looked down upon the terrace, still bathed in moonlight. Her window was almost opposite the place where she and Garth had talked. She could see the stone lion and the vase full of scarlet

geraniums. She could locate the exact spot where she was sitting when he — Memory awoke, vibrant.

Then Jane allowed herself the most wonderful mental experience of her life. She was a woman of purpose and decision. She had said she had a right to that hour, and she took it to the full. In soul she met her tiger and mated with him, unafraid. He had not asked whether she loved him or not, and she did not need to ask herself. She surrendered her proud liberty, and tenderly, humbly, wistfully, yet with all the strength of her strong nature, promised to love, honour, and obey him. She met the adoration of his splendid eyes without a tremor. She had locked her body out. She was alone with her soul; and her soul was all-beautiful — perfect for him.

The loneliness of years slipped from her. Life became rich and purposeful. He needed her always, and she was always there and always able to meet his need. "Are you content, my beloved?" she asked over and over; and Garth's joyous voice, with the ring of perpetual youth in it, always answered: "Perfectly content." And Jane smiled into the night, and in the depths of her calm eyes dawned a knowledge hitherto unknown, and in her tender smile trembled, with unspeakable sweetness, an understanding of the secret of a woman's truest bliss. "He is mine and I am his. And because he is mine, my beloved is safe; and because I am his, he is content."

Thus she gave herself completely; gathering him into the shelter of her love; and her generous heart expanded to the greatness of the gift. Then the mother in her awoke and realised how much of the maternal flows into the love of a true woman when she understands how largely the child-nature predominates in

the man in love, and how the very strength of his need of her, reduces to unaccustomed weakness the strong nature to which she has become essential.

Jane pressed her hands upon her breast. "Garth," she whispered, "Garth, *I understand*. My own poor boy, it was so hard to you to be sent away just then. But you had had all — all you wanted, in those few wonderful moments, and nothing can rob you of that fact. And you have made me *so* yours that, whatever the future brings for you and me, no other face will ever be hidden here. It is yours, and I am yours — to-night, and henceforward, forever."

Jane leaned her forehead on the window-sill. The moonlight fell on the heavy coils of her brown hair. The scent of the magnolia blooms rose in fragrance around her. The song of a nightingale purred and thrilled in an adjacent wood. The lonely years of the past, the perplexing moments of the present, the uncertain vistas of the future, all rolled away. She sailed with Garth upon a golden ocean far removed from the shores of time. For love is eternal; and the birth of love frees the spirit from all limitations of the flesh.

A clock in the distant village struck midnight. The twelve strokes floated up to Jane's window across the moonlit park. Time was, once more. Her freed spirit resumed the burden of the body.

A new day had begun, the day upon which she had promised her answer to Garth. The next time that clock struck twelve she would be standing with him in the church, and her answer must be ready.

She turned from the window without closing it, drew the curtains closely across, switched on the electric light over the writing-table, took off her even-

ing gown, hung up bodice and skirt in the wardrobe, resolutely locking the door upon them. Then she slipped on a sage-green wrapper, which she had lately purchased at a bazaar because every one else fled from it, and the old lady whose handiwork it was seemed so disappointed, and, drawing a chair near the writing-table, took out her diary, unlocked the heavy clasp, and began to read. She turned the pages slowly, pausing here and there, until she came to those she sought. Over them she pondered long, her head in her hands. They contained a very full account of her conversation with Garth on the afternoon of the day of the concert at Overdene; and the lines upon which she specially dwelt were these: "His face was transfigured. . . . Goodness and inspiration shone from it, making it as the face of an angel. . . . I never thought him ugly again. Child though I was, I could differentiate even then between ugliness and plainness. I have associated his face ever since with the wondrous beauty of his soul. When he sat down, at the close of his address, I no longer thought him a complicated form of chimpanzee. I remembered the divine halo of his smile. Of course it was not the sort of face one *could* have wanted to live with, or to have day after day opposite one at table, but then one was not called to that sort of discipline, which would have been martyrdom to me. And he has always stood to my mind since as a proof of the truth that goodness is never ugly, and that divine love and aspiration, shining through the plainest features, may redeem them, temporarily, into beauty; and permanently, into a thing one loves to remember."

At first Jane read the entire passage. Then her mind focussed itself upon one sentence: "*Of course*

it was not the sort of face one could have wanted to live with, or to have day after day opposite one at table, which would have been martyrdom to me."

At length Jane arose, turned on all the lights over the dressing-table, particularly two bright ones on either side of the mirror, and, sitting down before it, faced herself honestly.

When the village clock struck one, Garth Dalmain stood at his window taking a final look at the night which had meant so much to him. He remembered, with an amused smile, how, to help himself to calmness, he had sat on the terrace and thought of his socks, and then had counted the windows between his and Jane's. There were five of them. He knew her window by the magnolia tree and the seat beneath it where he had chanced to sit, not knowing she was above him. He leaned far out and looked towards it now. The curtains were drawn, but there appeared still to be a light behind them. Even as he watched, it went out.

He looked down at the terrace. He could see the stone lion and the vase of scarlet geraniums. He could locate the exact spot where she was sitting when he —

Then he dropped upon his knees beside the window and looked up into the starry sky.

Garth's mother had lived long enough to teach him the holy secret of her sweet patience and endurance. In moments of deep feeling, words from his mother's Bible came to his lips more readily than expressions of his own thought. Now, looking upward, he repeated softly and reverently: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down

from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." "And oh, Father," he added, "keep us in the light — she and I. May there be in us, as there is in Thee, no variableness, neither shadow which is cast by turning."

Then he rose to his feet and looked across once more to the stone lion and the broad coping. His soul sang within him, and he folded his arms across his chest. "My wife!" he said. "Oh! my wife!"

And, as the village clock struck one, Jane arrived at her decision.

Slowly she rose, and turned off all the lights; then, groping her way to the bed, fell upon her knees beside it, and broke into a passion of desperate, silent weeping.