

lady, as she walked up the paved way that led from the gate, and was near enough to see and hear the interview between the new arrival and his hostess.

Thomasville had long been a delightful winter resort for people weary of the excessive cold of the Northern cities; but the hotels were crowded so late in the year as this, and many were entertained in houses opened for boarders both in the town and in the country around.

He had himself been glad to find so agreeable a residence as that offered by the country home of the widow Busac, a broad-piazzaed villa of the old Southern type; and it was a pleasure to know that among the guests—there were few at present besides himself—was to be a young lady of such an attractive appearance.

The widow met her new guest with an evident air of complacency. She had been apprised of her expected arrival a few days before; and the arrangements made by letter had been mutually satisfactory.

"Mrs. Sinclair, I presume?" she murmured. "Come in; I am glad to see you. The servants will bring in your trunks. I trust you have had a pleasant journey."

"Delightful!" was the reply. "The air grows softer and softer the farther south one travels, and it is simply exquisite to see wild flowers along the road at this time of the year. I left snow behind me at home."

Her voice was to Marchmont's ear not so soft as that of many a Southern girl he had known. But it was wonderfully clear, and by the richness of its tone he divined at once that she sang deliciously. He began to hope ardently that she was one of those independent young girls of

whom there are many nowadays, who are not all afraid to travel alone, especially at the somewhat mature age of twenty-five. The widow Busac, it is true, had called her, if his ears were not mistaken, "Mrs." Sinclair. But then that might be a mistake of hers. It was too tantalizing to look forward to living in the same house with a person so lovely and to think that she was perhaps a married woman.

The very next remark, however, of the hostess, as the two walked up the steps, elicited a reply which completely disconcerted the young man. "Where is your husband, Mrs. Sinclair?" asked the widow.

The quizzical smile, which stole to the lips of the new-comer, and played awhile there as she spoke, was something Marchmont could not help observing, but utterly failed to comprehend. It brightened the sweetness of her expression, but did not seem at all compatible with her words. These were:

"Oh! Charley, he's in the isle of Luzon, fighting for his country."

"Good heavens!" thought Marchmont. "How little distressed she seems to be at the idea of his danger or at the thought of his distance from her! But, however that may be, my cake is dough: she's a married woman after all, and I must not, yes, must not fall in love with her."

Meantime the two had vanished within the house. Marchmont read on one of the trunks as they were carried in the name, "Kate Sinclair, West Newton, Mass." This and the statement she had made to their hostess constituted all the information he had so far been able to obtain about one whose mere presence had stirred