

some," he whispered. And at this moment Mrs. MacGill interrupted us and insisted that I should tie on her shawl. The homeward drive was begun, but it would be too long a story to describe its miseries. Imagination must do its work here.

## VII

Virginia Pomeroy

I WOKE this morning neither rested nor refreshed. I was determined not to stay in bed, for I wanted to show Sir Archibald by my calm and natural demeanour that I was unconscious of anything embarrassing in our relations. For that matter I am not sure that there is. I wore my pink linen, and looked paler instead of gayer, as I intended. Breakfast was quiet, though mamma had borne the picnic wonderfully and Miss Evesham was brighter than usual. Sir Archibald was baffling. He met my eye as seldom as possible, but I am glad to say, though he was absent-minded, he was not grumpy. Why do I care whether he is grumpy or not? Why do I like to see him come out sunny and warm and genial, and relax his severe face into an unexpected laugh? And

why do I feel pleased when he melts under my particular coaxing? I have deliberately tried to disparage him to myself and compare him with other men, especially with Breck Calhoun, always to his disadvantage. He is not a bit handsomer than Breck, though mere beauty after all counts for almost nothing in a man. He has n't, on the whole, as good manners as Breck, and does n't begin to understand me as well. He is an ordinary, straight, simple, intelligent but not intellectual Anglo-Saxon. I have assured myself of this dozens of times, and having treated him as a kind of snow image, merely for the satisfaction of throwing disparaging epithets at him, and demolishing his outline, I look at him next morning only to find that he has put himself together again and made himself, somehow, into the semblance of the man I love.

There are plenty of men who can manage their own moods, without a woman's kind offices, so why should I bother about his?

If it were Breck Calhoun, now, he would be bothering about mine! It is just the time of year when dear old Breck makes the annual offer of his heart and hand — more, as he says, as a matter of habit than anything else, and simply to remind me that there is an excellent husband waiting for me at home when I cease running after strange hearts. That is his expression.

I think some of the marriages between persons of different nationality must come off because of the fascination and mystery that each has for the other, — the same sort of fascination, but a still stronger one, that is exerted by an opposite temperament. In the friendship of a man of Sir Archibald's type I feel a sense of being steadied and strengthened, simplified and balanced. And there ought to be something in the vivacity of the American girl — the result of climate and circumstances and condition, I suppose — which should enliven and stimulate these graver "children of the mist." The feeling

I have lately had for Archibald Mackenzie (he would frown if he could hear me leave out the Maxwell and the Kindarroch) is just the basis I need for love, but my liking would never go so far as that, unless it were compelled by a still stronger feeling on the man's part. I am not going to do any of the wooing, that is certain. If a man chose to give me his very best I would try to deserve it and keep it and cherish it, but I have no desire to fan his inward fires beforehand. After he is once kindled, if he has n't heat enough to burn of his own free will, then let him go out! Sir Archibald is afraid of himself and afraid of love. Well, he need not worry about me! I might like to see the delightfully incongruous spectacle of a man of his type honestly and heartily in love, and (in passing) it would be of inestimable benefit to his character; but I want no panic-stricken lovers in my company. Have n't I enough fears of my own, about wet climates and cold houses and monarchical

governments and tin bath-tubs and porridge and my mother's preference for American husbands? But I should despise myself if I did n't feel capable of throwing all these, and more, overboard if the right time ever comes.

. . . . .

I have n't been downstairs either to luncheon or tea, but I looked from mamma's window and chanced to see Johnson putting Sir Archibald's portmanteau into the motor. I thought this morning that he intended to run away. And that is the stuff they make soldiers of in Scotland! Afraid of love! Fie! Sir Archibald!

I cannot succeed in feeling like the "maiden all forlorn." It impresses me somehow that he has gone away to think it over. Well, that is reasonable; I don't suppose to a man of Sir Archibald's temperament two weeks seems an extreme length of time in which to choose a wife; and as I need considerable reflection on my part I'll

go away too, presently, and take mamma to Torquay, as was our original intention. Torquay is relaxing, and I think I have been a trifle too much stimulated by this bracing moorland air. I hope for his own comfort that Sir Archibald will do his thinking in a warmer clime; and when (or if) he returns to acquaint Virginia with the result of his meditations, he will learn that she also is thinking — but in a place unknown!

Mrs. MacGill

It is just as I feared. The trouble is in my right knee, so stiff that I can scarcely bend it, and exceedingly painful. Cecilia calls it "a touch of rheumatism."

"Indeed," I said, "it's a pretty secure grasp, not a touch; were I what is called a *danseuse*, my livelihood would be gone, but mercifully I don't need to dance."

Cecilia laughed; she thinks nothing of any illness but neuralgia.

"We must leave this place very soon," said I, "and return to Tunbridge Wells; life here is fit only for cannibals."

In the morning it was impossible for me to come down to breakfast, but with great difficulty I dragged myself downstairs about eleven. I felt it my duty to the son of an old friend to seek an opportunity for quietly speaking my mind to Sir Archibald about

Miss Pomeroy, so decided to do it at once. I found them together, as usual, in the coffee-room. The girl was looking pale; she is beginning to be afraid that her arts are in vain.

Sir Archibald was standing beside her, looking very much bored. She made some excuse, and left the room soon after I had come in.

"I hope you are not the worse of your adventure in the motor, Mrs. MacGill," Sir Archibald began.

"Thank you," said I, sitting down close to him. "I am, a good deal. My right knee is excessively painful, and I have a very strange buzzing in the head."

"Ah, you are not accustomed to the motor; it's all habit."

"I am *not* accustomed to a motor, Sir Archibald," said I, "nor am I accustomed to the ways of young women nowadays, — *young ladies* we used to be called when I was a girl, but I feel that the phrase is quite

inapplicable to a person like Miss Pomeroy."

"'Young woman' is better, perhaps," he said, I thought with a smile.

"No lady," I continued, "when *I* was young, would talk like that or act like that. 'A sweet face shrinking under a cottage bonnet' (as Mr. MacGill used to say) is better than any tulip."

Sir Archibald smiled again, and seemed about to leave the room, but I asked him to be so good as to hold a skein of wool for me. I had brought down my knitting, so he sat down to hold it, looking rather annoyed.

I continued firmly, "There is a freedom — I should almost say a license — about American women and their ways" —

"You have dropped your ball," he said; and when he had returned it to me, he began to try to change the subject by remarking about the weather.

"It is," I said, "extremely cold, as it has always been ever since I came here, but, as

I was saying, there is something about Miss Pomeroy's singing" —

Here he bent his head so low that I was unable to see his face, and stretched my wool so tight that I fear my next socks will be spoiled; it was three-ply merino, and very soft.

"She sings," I went on without taking any notice of the wool, "in a way that I feel sure poor Mr. MacGill would have considered indecorous. I was a musician myself as a girl, and used to sing with much expression. 'She wore a Wreath of Roses' was a great favourite. I always expected to be asked to repeat it. I remember on one occasion when I came to —

A sombre widow's cap adorns  
Her once luxuriant hair,

a gentleman who stood by the piano — he was a widower — was obliged to turn away. But that was quite a different matter from the kind of expression that Miss Pomeroy puts into things. It's not proper. I must

speak plainly to you, and say it is almost passionate, though I dislike to use the word.

When I am dead, my dearest —

Are these words for the drawing-room? You are pulling my skein rather tight, Sir Archibald. It stretches so easily, and these light wools require such care.

And dreaming through the twilight,  
Haply I may remember, and haply may forget.

Remember *what?* forget *what?* The inquiry rises unbidden. Just ask yourself if these are words for the lips of any young woman — far less a young *lady*."

Here Sir Archibald coughed so violently that he had to let go my wool (which got all tangled) and stand up.

"Excuse me," he interrupted, "but I have promised to speak with Johnson about something" —

"I won't detain you more than a minute," I interrupted, "only just to say a word of warning to the son of an old friend. For-

eigners who speak our own language are the worst of all. Oh, Sir Archibald, your grandmother was Scotch, your mother was Scotch before you were born, and all your good aunts too. I must warn you that if you let this American girl, this Miss Pomeroy, succeed in her attempt" —

"Mrs. MacGill," he exclaimed, "I cannot allow you to use Miss Pomeroy's name to me in this way."

"Very well," said I, "but if you do not take my advice and beware, Miss Pomeroy will have no name to mention, for she will be Lady Maxwell Mackenzie, and you will be a miserable man with an American wife."

He muttered something, I could n't say what; the word "Jove" was mentioned, and there was some allusion to "an old cat." I failed to see the connection, for no one could call Miss Pomeroy "old," whatever she is; then without a word of apology he left the room. Young men, even baronets, have no manners nowadays. Mr. MacGill's were

courtly; he never used one word where two would do, and bowed frequently to every lady, often apologizing most profusely when there was no occasion for it.

Sir Archibald Maxwell Mackenzie

CARLETON HOTEL, LONDON

I CAME down late, the morning after that drive, having spent a bad night. In spite of the fact that Johnson had been out with the motor and the old ladies till nearly midnight, I never thought of going down to look at the car. It had lost interest in a way I did n't like. To tell the truth, I was thinking of nothing at all except of that girl. I had made up my mind that this was not to be endured. Since I kissed her — it is awful to confess it — I have wished for nothing so much as to kiss her again, and before I become the sort of blithering idiot that a man is when in love, I must and shall be off. It is not the girl I funk; she is a nice girl; I never wish to see a nicer, and I know I never shall. It is the feeling I am beginning to have about her. When she is not there I feel as

if something necessary to my existence were wanting, — as if I had come off without a pocket-handkerchief or gone out in a top-hat and frock-coat without an umbrella on a showery day in town. When a man gets to feel this about another human being it is time he was off. I have sent orders to Johnson to be ready to start at any moment.

I wish I had not seen Miss Virginia, though, before going. She looked so pale and done up. Mrs. MacGill came into the room before I had time to speak to her, even to tell her I was going away, though I somehow think she guessed it. As to that old frump, that harpy in black velvet and beads, Mrs. MacGill, I will not write down the things she elected to say to me about Virginia, when she had got me tied to her apron string with her confounded skein of wool. I wish I had chucked it in her face and told her to go to the devil. If I'd had the spirit of half a man, I would have done it, and gone straight to Virginia.



Virginia! This gave me a feeling about her that I can't describe, — much, much worse than the handkerchief-and-umbrella feeling, — a feeling that seemed to tweak and pull at something inside me that I had never been conscious of before. But I had an obstinate fit on, that I'm subject to, like other men, I suppose. I had said I would go, and I have gone, leaving a card of good-by for the Pomeroy's, and making straight for town.

. . . . .

It is no use; for after a few days of struggle and doubt and misery, I have got to go back to that girl — if I can find her. What a wretched time I have had! If this is being in love I hope it won't last. I'm told it does n't usually, after marriage. Perhaps it settles down into something more comfortable, that does not interfere with a man's meals or destroy his sleep. It is awful to think that your whole life may or may not be changed, according to the fancy of a

girl whose existence you weren't aware of a fortnight ago! I have told Johnson we are going straight back to Dartmoor, and he grinned — the wretch! Of course he knows why.

Cecilia Evesham

GREY TOR INN  
Thursday morning

ENDED the Dartmoor drama! Gone Sir Archibald! Vanished the motor! Gone too, dear Virginia and Mrs. Pomeroy! only Mrs. MacGill and I are left! He went on Wednesday, the Pomeroy's on Thursday, and I now await events. Virginia tells me she has taken her mother to Torquay, but that is a wide word!

Saturday

I thought it would be so: a week without her was enough. Yesterday Sir Archibald, or what used to be Sir Archibald, appeared at the inn again.

But what a change was here! Shall I put down our conversation without comment?

*Cecilia*: So you have come back, Sir Archibald?

*Sir A.*: Yes.

*Cecilia*: I hope you had a pleasant run to town, or wherever you went.

*Sir A.*: Beastly.

*Cecilia*: What? Did the motor break down, or the weather?

*Sir A.*: Neither.

*Cecilia*: What was wrong, then?

*Sir A.*: Everything. (Then suddenly) Where have the Pomeroy's gone to, Miss Evesham?

*Cecilia*: To Torquay, I understand.

*Sir A.*: Do you know their address?

*Cecilia*: I do not. I suppose they will be at one of the hotels.

*Sir A.*: You are making fun of me. Tell me where they are. I am in earnest.

*Cecilia*: So am I. I do not know their address.

He started up, wrung my hand without a word, and hurried out of the room. I looked after him in the hall, but he was so intent on the Torquay guide that he never noticed me.