

My good friends, Monsieur and Madame Villeray, will be only too glad to receive English ladies, known to me for many years. The spacious and handsome first floor of their house (inherited from once wealthy ancestors by Madame Villeray) can be got ready to receive Mrs. Eyrecourt and her daughter in a week's time. Our one difficulty related to the question of money. Monsieur Villeray, living on a Government pension, was modestly unwilling to ask terms; and I was too absolutely ignorant of the subject to be of the slightest assistance to him. It ended in our appealing to a house-agent at St. Germain. His estimate appeared to me to be quite reasonable. But it exceeded the pecuniary limit mentioned by Mrs. Eyrecourt. I had known the Villerays long enough to be in no danger of offending them by proposing a secret arrangement which permitted me to pay the difference. So that difficulty was got over in due course of time.

We went into the large garden at the back of the house, and there I committed another act of duplicity.

In a nice sheltered corner I discovered one of those essentially French buildings called a "pavilion," a delightful little toy house of three rooms. Another private arrangement made me the tenant of this place. Madame Villeray smiled. "I bet you," she said to me in her very best English, "one of these ladies is in her fascinating first youth." The good lady little knows what a hopeless love affair mine is. I must see Stella sometimes--I ask, and hope for, no more. Never have I felt how lonely my life is, as I feel it now.

Third Extract.

London, March 1.--Stella and her mother have set forth on their journey to St. Germain this morning, without allowing me, as I had hoped and planned, to be their escort.

Mrs. Eyrecourt set up the old objection of the claims of propriety. If that were the only obstacle in my way, I should have set it aside by following them to France. Where is the impropriety of my seeing Stella, as her friend and brother--especially when I don't live in the same house with her, and when she has her mother, on one side, and Madame Villeray, on the other, to take care of her?

No! the influence that keeps me away from St. Germain is the influence of Stella herself.

"I will write to you often," she said; "but I beg you, for my sake, not to accompany us to France." Her look and tone reduced me to obedience. Stupid as I am I think (after what passed between me and her mother) I can guess what she meant.

"Am I never to see you again?" I asked.

"Do you think I am hard and ungrateful?" she answered. "Do you doubt that I shall be glad, more than glad, to see you, when--?"

She turned away from me and said no more.

It was time to take leave. We were under her mother's superintendence; we shook hands and that was all.

Matilda (Mrs. Eyrecourt's maid) followed me downstairs to open the door. I suppose I looked, as I felt, wretchedly enough. The good creature tried to cheer me. "Don't be anxious about them," she said; "I am used to traveling, sir--and I'll take care of them." She is a woman to be

thoroughly depended on, a faithful and attached servant. I made her a little present at parting, and I asked her if she would write to me from time to time.

Some people might consider this to be rather an undignified proceeding on my part. I can only say it came naturally to me. I am not a dignified man; and, when a person means kindly toward me, I don't ask myself whether that person is higher or lower, richer or poorer, than I am. We are, to my mind, on the same level when the same sympathy unites us. Matilda was sufficiently acquainted with all that had passed to foresee, as I did, that there would be certain reservations in Stella's letters to me. "You shall have the whole truth from Me, sir, don't doubt it," she whispered. I believed her. When my heart is sore, give me a woman for my friend. Whether she is lady or lady's-maid, she is equally precious to me.

Cowes, March 2.--I am in treaty with an agent for the hire of a yacht.

I must do something, and go somewhere. Returning to Beaupark is out of the question. People with tranquil minds can find pleasure in the society of their country neighbors. I am a miserable creature, with a mind in a state of incessant disturbance. Excellent fathers of families talking politics to me; exemplary mothers of families offering me matrimonial opportunities with their daughters--that is what society means, if I go back to Devonshire. No. I will go for a cruise in the Mediterranean; and I will take one friend with me whose company I never weary of--my dog.

The vessel is discovered--a fine schooner of three hundred tons, just returned from a cruise to Madeira. The sailing-master and crew only ask for a few days on shore. In that time the surveyor will have examined the vessel, and the stores will be on board.