fresh as May, and the air so soothing that conversa-
tion slumbered at intervals.

"How good you were to come up the path with me this morning, Mr. Laurens. How did you know it would be so delightful here?"

"I took your word for it."

"Did I ask you to come? Why, so I did, to be sure."

After a pause: "An odd thing for a young lady to do, wasn't it, Mr. Laurens?"

"I don't know. It's certainly very pleasant here."

"I suppose young ladies in Boston never do such things."

"Oh, I suppose they do, sometimes," he said, with a gracious air of apology for her innovation.

She shook her head as one might to a child with an overfondness for fiction.

"I made up my mind this morning as soon as I looked out of my window, that I would come here and get some ferns. The Miss Pointers couldn't go, so of course I had to ask you, if I was to go at all. I hope you don't think I should have asked you if they could have gone?"

A vision of the Miss Pointers, with their well-preserved silk gowns and their respectable gray curls, in the act of crossing the river on rolling stones, made Laurens' eyes laugh.

"I don't flatter myself so much," he said. "That's well."

"What was that book in which you were so absorbed this morning?" she said, after a little silence.

"On the piazza, when you were going to the tennis ground?"

"Yes. How did you know I was on the tennis ground?"

"I saw you there practicing most diligently, and I thought of old Mr. Benbury with a sigh."

"Why didn't you come down and show me that overhand serve you promised?"

"I didn't suppose you cared for it then."

"Cared for it! Of course I didn't. But you haven't told me what the book was."

"It was a text-book on trigonometry. I promised a young cousin of mine who is a little behindhand at the Tech., that I would coach him a bit for an examination."

"That's some kind of mathematics, isn't it? I'm very fond of mathematics. I took an advanced course in arithmetic at our high school. Ask me some question, and see how quickly I can answer it."

"Very well. If it takes five minutes to pull apart three bunches of ferns and put together one, how long will it take to arrange a basketful?"

"What an impolite question! If you are tired of waiting, we'll go home."

"I did not say I was tired," he said with an air of surprise.

"As if that wasn't enough," said she sadly, gathering up her fallen ferns. "I declare, Mr. Laurens! do get up, quickly!"

Laurens jumped to his feet with an unpleasant suspicion of snakes. The young lady dropped her ferns on the ground and said, despairingly,—

"You've been sitting directly on some coral lichens. I've been looking for them all this summer!"

"Oh! is that all?" said Laurens, with an air of relief.

"As if that wasn't enough," said she sadly, gathering up her fallen ferns. "I declare, Mr. Laurens, there's no bearing with you today; you've no sympathy nor consideration."

She led the way home with determined steps, answering Laurens' attempts at conversation with very brief and careless rejoinders.

II.

That afternoon, Laurens, in taking down his fishing coat, dropped a letter from the