request as she did? She could not have told herself. In some strange, inexplicable way she felt a sudden anger and resentment toward Darcy. With wrathful eyes she faced him, and her voice was full of passionate anger as she answered: "Mr. Darcy, I most certainly do consider it presumption on your part. There is no occasion for sentiment between you and me, and I must beg to be excused."

Jack stood as one struck with a heavy blow. Miss Dysart moved across the room and had her hand on the door before he aroused himself. His voice arrested her, and the proud, angry ring in it rather startled her. She had never heard him speak in such a tone before. "Stop, please," he said; "do not trouble yourself to leave, Miss Dysart. I will not intrude upon you longer. I made a mistake just now. I," bitterly, "have been mistaken all along. I really beg your pardon. I—I shall not trouble you again"; and with an aching heart, in which love and indignation struggled for the mastery, he hurriedly left the room.

CHAPTER II.

Late that afternoon, Lena Dysart, looking aggravatingly cool in a pretty dress of some light, filmy material and broad-brimmed sunhat to match, came down the steps from Oakley and wandered listlessly along the terrace. Her outward appearance, however, was in ill-keeping with her inward state of mind. She could not keep her thoughts from reverting to the scene in the morning-room; she had been thinking of it all day. It was very annoying that it should trouble her so. He certainly deserved it for his impertinence. Yes, it was impertinence, she told herself, as she walked along the garden path; she had never given him any reason to think,—and then for the hundredth time that day the thought recurred to her that he looked very handsome as he stood before her, his proud face pale with anger. Perhaps, after all, she need not have spoken so harshly. He would surely come in the evening, again, and then she would atone a little. She would be graciousness itself. Of course she could not be otherwise to her brother's friend. And perhaps,—yes, perhaps she would play "Auf"—that piece for him, if he liked. Thus her thoughts ran on as she opened the little rustic gate at the end of the garden, and took one of her favorite paths along the outskirts of the woods which bounded Chellingworth Court. And so she strolled on for half an hour, until suddenly she became aware of the fact that somebody was in front of her. She stopped with a startled little scream. The next instant she recognized the intruder, and became partially reassured. "You are Dobbs, I believe," she said, looking into the man's face; "and—why, I believe that you are poaching again," as her eyes fell on a bunch of birds hastily thrown into the grass behind him. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," she continued,—"a great strong man like you, too lazy to work, and so you steal!" There came a dangerous gleam into the man's eyes as she uttered the harsh accusation, but she was not at all abashed. Her indignation was aroused, and she looked fearlessly at him, as she continued, "This is the second time you have been caught poaching; I remember Mr. Darcy's telling about allowing you to escape punishment on account of your promises. You have not kept your word, and I shall see that Mr. Darcy knows of this."

For a moment the entrapped game-thief glared at her in silence, and then suddenly he stepped forward and leered into her face. "Ye'll peach on me, will ye? Take care; don't put on any o' yer fine airs with me. If I thought ye'd get me into trouble, I'd choke the pretty life out of ye"; and he grasped her roughly by the arm,—so roughly that involuntarily she closed her eyes with the pain. Even as she did so the brutal hand was torn from her arm, and she opened her eyes to see the poacher thrown staggering back against a tree, and Jack Darcy standing between them. If there had been a transformation in the morning from the easy-going Croesus, there