



#### CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

The little group about Aube's chair made way at once for the ladies, who were now all smiles, and after a while Aube's court dispersed, leaving the trio alone.

"My darling, you look quite weary," said Madame Saintone, taking Aube's hand.

"Yes," echoed Antoinette, eagerly. "Aube, dear, have some tea or lemonade."

"No, no," she said, smiling gratefully; "I only want to be quiet and look at the beautiful sunset. I ought not to mind, but talking so much tires me. It is ungrateful, for everyone is so kind."

"Of course," said Madame Saintone, and these fashionable young men chattered so much nonsense—so full of flattery, it is wearisome at times. I know poor Toinette is glad to get away from it all." Aube smiled at the girl, and wished in her heart she could like her better, and that she did not always think there was something in her companion which repelled her as much as the effusive tenerness of her mother.

"We shall soon be there now, shall we not?" said Aube, after a silence, during which she sat back, gazing wistfully at the sea.

"Yes, to-morrow morning; and then we shall be at home."

"And it is very beautiful, is it not, Madame Saintone?"

"Beautiful beyond description, my dear, every different to Paris. A land of sun and flowers and fruit. No cold, dry, chilly skies there."

"Yes, it must be very, very lovely," said Aube; and then to herself, "fit me for the dear mother who is waiting to take me to her heart." And then words se to her lips. These people had seen her mother slightly, they had, and she wanted to question them about the home to which she was going—hundred things. But there was something about Madame Saintone which kept from making her the depository of burning thoughts which agitated her, as the days had glided by during the peaceful voyage till now, when it was early at an end, she was as ignorant of her mother and her surroundings as ever.

"Yes, my dear, it is beautiful; and, I don't think me vain. You will be lighted with my home. You know I am flowers, and my home is a perfect wonder. Ah, my darling, I am so glad at we met as we did. I can never be thankful enough to the Consul for giving me so delightful a charge."

"I ought to be grateful, too, Madame Saintone," said Aube, coloring. "You and Toinette here have been most kind to me."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Toinette. "Who'd help being kind to you?"

"Ah, who indeed? Aube, my dear, you can make our place your home as much as you can. Our society may be a little ill, but the welcome will be sincere, and Toinette must play and practice together."

She fixed her eyes on her daughter as she spoke, for the girl was biting her viciously.

"Is mamma gone mad?" she thought herself.

You are too kind to me," said Aube, as she was oppressed by all this. "Of course, I shall come to see you, but after this long parting, my mother will hardly like to leave her side."

"At first, of course," said Madame Saintone.

"Ah, look!" she said, "you are having a glorious welcome home. It is as if you were smiling upon your return."

"Yes," said Aube, softly, as she gazed with a strange feeling of awe at the skies of the western sky. "I never saw anything so grand as this."

No, my dear, shut up as you have been in the convent. And now, look here, I am going to take upon myself to give you a bit of advice. To-morrow morning you meet your mamma. Now I should you ought to look your best and put your richest dress."

"Richest dress?" said Aube, wondering.

"I have only that white cashmere."

"Oh, my darling, that will hardly do now. I have it. You and Toinette just of a size. She shall lend you her colored brocade; it would go admirably with your dark complexion."

Toinette's jaw dropped, and there was a look of horrified astonishment in her eyes; but her mother gave her a flash of the eyes that she forced aside, and then as the eyes still fastened her as if commanding her to speak, said hastily:

"Oh, yes, mamma, it would look charming upon her."

"You are both very good to me," said she gravely; "but I cannot do that. I'd rather my mother should see me as I am—just as I have been all these years in the convent."

"But, my dear," said Madame Saintone, "a woman's duty to make the best possible."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

The light had died out in the west, the rapid tropic night was coming on the rose.

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."

"I am tired," she said, "and I want to go to think about to-morrow. I say good-night now."

"I have been told. I think it is who said so, Antoinette; but you excuse me and not think me ungrateful."

"In no, my dear," said Madame Saintone, trying to hide her disappointment; "perhaps you are right. That simple cashmere does become you so well, I think."