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Church." "Turquoise and Pearl," being so plain spoken as either the or the theologians, was a great deal disgusting.

breakfast next morning I invited Margaret to join the expedition to the Ogam. I really wanted her. I felt that I needed a chaperon. I was embarrassed at the prospect of a walk alone with the press of "Turquoise and Pearl." Margaret refused the invitation.

"I should only be in the way," she said. "You and Miss Bentley are going to talk about Sanskrit I should be bored." "I probably won't talk about Sanskrit," I said. "She only did so last night to tease me. You've often told me that is what clever women do with men like me." "What will you talk about, then?"

"I don't know; perhaps about novels. Miss Bentley, it appears, is rather a famous novelist."

"I never heard of her. What has she written?"

"She didn't tell me the names of her books," I said, "and I didn't like to ask her." "Well, I don't know her books," said Margaret, "so there's no use of my coming with you."

I took Miss Bentley to see the Ogam stones. We started at 11 and did not get back until nearly 2. We talked the whole afternoon about the Gaelic language, ancient and modern. She was evidently bent on making something of me. She did it most successfully. I found it difficult to believe that she was not interested in what I said. She certainly displayed extraordinary intelligence. She said—at the moment I actually believed that she had read my paper in the Philologist. She said—and this may have been true—that her uncle, the famous Prof. Deschamps of Heidelberg, had spoken of my work. I completely forgot my embarrassment and never gave a single thought to "Turquoise and Pearl."

I was obliged to confess to Margaret at afternoon tea that the conversation during my walk had never once turned on novels or novel writing.

"She must be a really, clever woman," Margaret thoughtfully. Long intimacy with Margaret had given me the power of repeating pretty accurately at what she means when she speaks. I knew that on this occasion she was not thinking of Miss Bentley as a savante, and that the cleverness which she recognized had nothing to do with Gaelic or Sanskrit.

"Wonder," Margaret went on, "why she is so." "I was perfectly frank in my reply. 'It isn't the least idea,' I said. 'But she'll probably not do it again. I shall talk about it at dinner tonight, even if I have to wait.'"

"Turquoise and Pearl" was in my mind, I said, "The Times Book Club." "I don't see any difficulty about that," said Margaret. "Everybody is talking about it." They were, at that time.

I tried to keep my resolve. Miss Bentley—she came in to dinner again, of course—made resolute efforts to return to the Ogam stones. I mentioned the name of every stone I could recollect, and commented freely on several that I had not read. Miss Bentley, with her monosyllables and displayed absolute no interest in the books.

"Miss Bentley," I said at last, "we talked yesterday evening and most of this morning about my work. Don't you think it's a pity that we talked about yours?"

"I blushed. With the recollection of 'Turquoise and Pearl' fresh in my mind, I wonder that she blushed. Even Mrs. Danton would blush, I suppose, if suspected of having read the book. It was plainly no worse to have written it. I am bound

to say she looked exceedingly charming, very innocent and shy, when I spoke directly about her work. She looked, indeed, much as I recollected Margaret looked when I found a poem that she had written. She was a schoolgirl at the time. I do not think she writes poems now.

"O, my work is nothing," said Miss Bentley.

"On the contrary," I said, "its fame has penetrated even to the west of Ireland. You must not think us utter barbarians."

"I'm in great hopes," she said, blushing again, more charmingly than ever, "that my paper for next month's meeting of the British association—"

"Your what?" I asked.

"My paper. Didn't you know? But of course you didn't. How could you? I am reading a paper in the philological section on Gaelic and Icelandic roots. My uncle is going over it for me and correcting it. That's the reason I wanted so much to meet you."

"But how can you possibly—"

"I'm sure it will be no good, really," she said, "but if you'll allow me, I should like to send you a copy of it afterward."

"Miss Bentley," I said, "did you write—I mean to say, have you ever read—what I want to say is, are you familiar with any modern novels?"

"I read Miss Yonge's," she said, "when I was at school, but I've been so busy ever since I went up to Girton that I really haven't had time for novels."

After dinner I got Mrs. Danton into a

corner by herself.

"That book," I said, "is the most disgusting thing I ever read."

"You seem to be getting on very well with Miss Bentley, all the same," said Mrs. Danton.

I saw that she was laughing at me, and I very nearly hated her; although she is, in spite of anything Margaret can say, a charming woman.

"She didn't write it," I said, "and it's an abominable insult."

"I know she didn't," said Mrs. Danton. "Don't be angry with me. I only found out my mistake tonight. I'd have told you before dinner if I'd got a chance. I was talking to Tom about it. He knew all along that Rose Bentley was an assumed name. I don't mean assumed by our Miss Bentley; I mean the other woman, the real one, you know. I don't wonder she didn't use her own name. She's a married woman, and her husband is trying to get a separation from her on account of the book. Tom says he doesn't wonder."

"I don't wonder, either," I said. "I shan't return the book; I shall burn it."

"You're quite right," said Mrs. Danton; "as a clergyman, I mean, of course."

Miss Bentley and I went again the next day to see the Ogam stones. We talked about ancient Gaelic and some other things. We did not get back until 3 o'clock. Margaret was out, but I met her later on at afternoon tea.

"Margaret," I said. "I have something very serious to say to you."

"I suppose," she said, "that you're engaged to be married to Miss Bentley?"

"Yes. How did you guess?"

"It's a comfort to think," she said, "that, being a novelist, she'll be able to earn something. You haven't much to marry on."

"She's not a novelist," I said. "She's a remarkable Gaelic scholar."

"Does she keep that up still?" said Margaret.

"There's no keeping up about it," I said. "She's reading a paper next month before the British association on Gaelic and Icelandic roots."

"But she is a novelist," said Margaret. "You told me so yesterday."

"I was mistaken. She never wrote a novel in her life, and I hope she never will."

"I am sorry to hear it. There's no money to be got out of Icelandic roots."

Margaret prides herself on her strong common sense. I am inclined to regard her as occasionally sordid.

Just before I went up to dress for dinner a boy came to the door with a note. It was from Mrs. Danton.

"A congratulation, of course," said Margaret. "May I see it?"

She leaned over my shoulder while I opened and read it.

"What does she mean," said Margaret, "by that postscript about the engagement ring being turquoise and pearls? Pearls are supposed to be unlucky."

"It's some silly joke," I said. "You never can tell what Mrs. Danton means when she tries to make jokes."



We talked about ancient Gaelic and some other things.