

Miss Bellard's Inspiration

A Novel

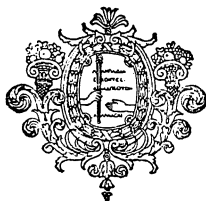
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"Letters Home" "Questionable Shapes"

"Literary Friends and Acquaintance"

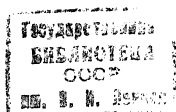
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I



Y dear, will you please read that letter again?" Mrs. Crombie said, in tones that might either be those of entreaty for her husband's compliance, or command of his obedience, or appeal to his clearer impression from the confusion which her niece's letter had cast her into. She began in a high, imperative note, and ended in something like an imploring whimper. She had first read the letter herself, and then thrown it across the breakfast-table to Crombie; and as he began to read it to himself she now added, "Aloud!"

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"I don't see any use in that," he said.
"There's no mystery about it."

"No mystery, when a girl like Lillias Bellard starts up out of space and asks a thing like that? We might as well sell the place at once. It will be as bad as The Surges before the summer is over; and I did think that if we came and built inland we could have a little peace of our lives." Crombie trivially thought of saying, "Little pieces of our lives," but he did not, and she went on: "If it's going on like this, the mountains will be as bad as the seashore, and there will be nothing left but Europe. *Give me that letter, Archibald!*"

She recovered it from his wanderingly extended left hand, his right being employed in filling up his cup with the exactly proportioned due of hot milk which he poured so as to make a bead on the surface of the coffee.

"I can't make Lillias out," Mrs. Crombie