

obvious necessity. With a conscious yet penetrating glance, closing the half-open door, he exclaimed, impulsively, "Dear Lady Geraldine, may I tell you something about myself?"

Geraldine flushed hotly. This was somewhat more than she had bargained for. With the slightest *soupeçon* of state-
liness, dreading what was to follow, she managed to say, that "Whatever he liked to tell her should go no further."

"It will all be known soon enough," cried he. "But I fancy, Lady Geraldine, you have some suspicion. I know I can trust you, and you have been always so kind and sympathetic to me; it is a much greater comfort telling you than Kate."

Geraldine bowed her head. She was determined not to betray herself, and even felt some little curiosity, though how abundantly that faculty was to be gratified ere she left the room, she certainly had not foreseen. One result was, it had an immediately bracing effect, for, with all her humility, Geraldine had the pride of self-respect, and the confession completely disabused her of the idea that Harry had ever aspired to being suitor of hers. It was a pang, no doubt. Even his confidence might have a double meaning. Had she any of the fury of a woman scorned, what an amount of mischief would be in her power! But Harry's instinct was right, and he never regretted his reliance on Geraldine's honour and pride.

Dutton and his wife continued to meet daily in secret. They had agreed to confess to Lord Bromley directly the visitors should have left, but I think were still young enough to enjoy the stratagems necessary for those stolen interviews. How many narrow escapes they were to laugh at afterwards! and, in society, when they appeared on such conventional terms as respectful youth and prudent governess, how many *doubles entendres* Harry hazarded, to see Bluebell struggling with alarmed risibility!

But the rash pair were outwitted at last, and run to earth by Kate in the moss arbour! How much of their conversation had been overheard, or how long she had stood there before springing out, of course could be only conjecture. A violent start had been irrepressible; and, as they both were speechless from the shock, Kate remained mistress of the situation, and evidently not disposed to be merciful. A few sarcastic ex-