

The young man smiled; dress does not appeal to a man as it does to a woman.

"Nothing can spoil my Ada, no matter what she wears," the lover answered, and taking the veil from her hands he drew her caressingly towards him and threw it over her head. She looked up at him from beneath the clouds of lace, the angry flush all gone, only the soft love-light shining in her eyes. He drew her arm through his own and led her across the spacious drawing-room, whose gilded mirrors reflected again and again the numberless elegancies that were scattered everywhere, the blue silk hangings, the statues and pictures and the brilliant chandelier. He paused before a large mirror that reached the floor, and gazed at her with an expression of rapt admiration. It was a fair picture to see—both so young, with life and love before them, and everything that can make this world worth having. There were a few minutes silence, then something like a shadow came over his handsome face as, leaning down, he whispered to his bride elect.

"I wish I could marry you now," Ada. I wish the few days were passed that still divide us."

"It is not long," she replied, "and then —"

"Then Ada, you are *mine*—mine forever, and I shall have no fear of anything coming to separate us."

A light shiver passed through her as he spoke, but he only felt the trembling of the little hand that rested in his own, as he said, in a low firm voice:—"I take thee, Ada, to have and to hold, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part."

He lifted her veil and lightly kissed her.

"You are my wife now," he said, smiling down upon her, "are you happy, Ada?"

She leant her head against him. "I am very, very happy," she replied, "because you love me; because the world would be a blank without you."

"If it were a blank to you, what would it be to *me* without my Ada?"

She looked at him and smiled as she answered:

"You would still have Constance Brereton! I believe, in spite of the Conservative interest, it *was* Constance you went to Bryanston Square to meet this evening?"

A slight flush rose to the young man's face, but he only laughed. "They say there is no real love free from a little jealousy, but you must promise me, Ada——"

What he wanted promised did not transpire, for at that particular moment Mrs. Stonor returned to the drawing-room, the butler brought in the tray, and the conversation necessarily became general.

The next day, as she had intended, Ada ordered the carriage—which always during the height of the season came to the door at four o'clock—to drive direct to Madame Brader's; so that at about quarter past the landau, which had been built by the most fashionable makers for her especial use, drew up at Madame Brader's door, in Hanover Square. There was a little bustle of excitement among the dressmakers and milliners as Miss Willingham passed into the show rooms, and then Madame Brader came forward, with a bland and respectful air, to receive her orders. The trousseau had been committed to her care, and, great authority as Madame Brader was in the world of fashion, it was nevertheless a triumph to have secured so important a customer as the belle of the London season; a young lady who was about to make a brilliant marriage, which would be talked about for a month at least.

"I have come about my veil," Ada said, "It is in the carriage, and I will trouble you to send for it—it has come home unfinished. The young woman who undertook to do it brought it back last evening, and refuses to add a stitch more."

Madame Brader was all surprise and despair. The people had promised it. The