

Let Not Man Put Asunder

"You would involve your husband, however."

Naturally; but that would be his *raison d'être*."

"And suppose Mr. Vassall saw things from another point of view?"

"One drives one's steed according to his temper, but one always guides him into the way in which one wants one's self to go."

"If that is your idea, Petrina, my child, stay single. Your steed, as you call him, is very likely to run away with you and smash the coach. What then?"

"Oh, then," Petrina laughed, "if one is not dead one scrambles to one's feet again, and begins retrospectively to enjoy the excitement."

"You are incorrigible."

"No, only frank. But, to change the subject slightly, may I ask if you had any other views for me, mamma?"

"I? *Jamais de la vie*. I should never venture to have views for you, Petrina. You have far too many of your own."

"Or hopes, then?"

"Hopes, perhaps."

"And may I inquire—who?"

"Never any one more than that nice Sir George Wallingford at Cannes."

"But I always told you it was out of the question."

"Yes, I know. Still I have never been above thinking that Lady Wallingford had a good deal of sonority. In case of widowhood it would be Petrina Lady Wallingford, which seems to suit your style. Then it gives me a chance, as mother-in-law to a title, which counts for something in a middle-aged woman's life. I have always secretly envied Mrs. Vassall her dignity as mother to a Lady de Bohun. But my hopes are all dashed now."