

and numbness that had succeeded the shock of Elsa's defection he hardly realised what others were planning round him. Perhaps when a man has been heartlessly slighted he turns unconsciously to the woman of whose undoubted love he is vaguely aware.

Jos sat at Mary's feet, not metaphorically but literally, for hours together by the sundial in the rose-garden; hardly speaking, like a man stunned. Still he sat there, and she did her embroidery, and looked softly down at him now and then. The doors of the narrow, airless prison of her love were open to receive him. They would be married presently, and she should make him give up the army, and become a magistrate instead. She would never let him out of her sight. A wife's place is beside her husband. She knew, for how many wives compact of experience had assured her during the evening hour of feminine confidence when the back hair is let down, that the perpetual presence of the wife was the only safeguard for the well-being of that mysterious creature of low instincts, that half-tamed wild animal, always liable to break away unless held in by feminine bit and bridle, that irresponsible babe, that slave of impulse—*man*. She would give him perfect freedom of course. She should encourage him to go into the Yeomanry, and she should certainly allow him to go out without her for the annual training. He would be quite safe in a tent, surrounded by his own tenantry; but, on other occasions, she, his wife, would be ever by his side. That was the only way to keep a man good and happy.

Early in September Jos went away for a few days' shooting. Mary, who generally paid rounds of visits after the season at dull country houses (she was not greatly in request at the amusing ones), still remained with the Carstairs, who implored her to stay on whenever she suggested that she was paying them "a visitation."

Jos was to return that afternoon, for General Carstairs was