

THE DIVINE FIRE

him to dinner at—yes, at his sister's, Miss Jewdwine's, house at Hampstead. That was to say, if his cousin, Lucia Harden, did not happen to be staying there. He was not quite sure how Rickman would strike that most fastidious of young ladies. And Rankin had said he drank.

In the light of Lucia Harden's and his sister's possible criticism, he considered him more carefully than he had done before.

The contrast between the two men was certainly rather marked. A gentleman can be neither more nor less than a gentleman, and Rickman, in a sense not altogether intended by Maddox, was decidedly more. His individuality was too exuberant, too irrepressible. He had the restless, emphatic air of a man who has but little leisure and is too obviously anxious to make the most of what he has. He always seemed to be talking against time ; and as he talked his emotions played visibly, too visibly, on his humorous, irregular face. Taking into account his remarkable firmness of physique, it struck you that this transparency must be due to some excessive radiance of soul. A soul (in Jewdwine's opinion) a trifle too demonstrative in its hospitality to vagrant impressions. The Junior Journalists may have been a little hard on him. On the whole, he left you dubious until the moment when, from pure nervousness, his speech went wild, even suffering that slight elision of the aspirate observed by some of them. But then, he had a voice of such singular musical felicity that it charmed you into forgetfulness of these enormities.

It had charmed Jewdwine from the first, and Jewdwine was hard to charm. There was no room for speculation as to him. Even to the eye his type had none of the uncertainty and complexity of Rickman's. He looked neither more nor less than he was—an Oxford don, developing into a London Journalist. You divined that the process would be slow. There was no unseemly haste about Jewdwine ; time had not been spared in the moulding of his body and his soul. He bore the impress of the ages ; the whole man was clean-cut, aristocratic, finished, defined. You instinctively looked up to him ; which was perhaps the reason why you remembered his conspicuously intellectual forehead and his pathetically fastidious nose, and forgot the vacil-