

CHAPTER XXXI

THAT evening Mr. Gooch went home with the Ivys whom, as he was now adrift, he purposed adopting. For a long time they sat over the fire discussing the exciting events of the day.

"I could scarcely believe my eyes," murmured Mrs. Ivy, "when at the verdict, 'Not Guilty,' I saw her fling her arms about his neck!"

"Why surprised?" snapped the attorney. "Are n't women born fatuous?"

"But the whole thing is so indelicate, so heartless! A young widow who ought to be mourning beside her husband's grave, and a wild young man who has just entered the penitentiary. Has n't suffering taught . . . anything?"

Gerald, sitting on a hassock before the fire with hands clasped about his knees, looked up with shining eyes:

"You don't understand, Mater! All this has been the price they've paid for each other. A great love like theirs comes high. One must pay for it with suffering. Jove, it was worth it! That one look they gave each other, there at the end —"