

scent of her hair stole away my senses, "perhaps some day I shall try you. Are you sure that you will not fail me then?"

I swore it, panting, and tried to draw her towards me by her arm; but she held back, laughing softly and as one well pleased; and then, in a moment, snatching her hand from me, she vanished in the darkness of the garden, leaving me in a seventh heaven of delight, my blood fired by her kisses, my fancy dwelling on her beauty; and without one afterthought.

Doubtless had I been less deep in love (wherein I was far over-head), or deeper in experience, I might have noted it for a curious thing that she should be so quickly comforted; and should be able to rise in a few moments, and at the touch of my lips, from passionate despair to perfect control, both of herself and of me. And starting thence, I might have gone on to suspect that she possessed her full share of the *finesse*, which is always a woman's shield and sometimes her sword. But as such suspicions are foreign to youth, so are they especially foreign to youthful love, which takes nothing lower than perfection for its idol. And this I can say for certain, that they no more entered my brain than did the consequences which were to flow from my passion.

For the time, indeed, I was in an ecstasy, a rapture, walking a-tip-toe, and troubled by none of the things that trouble common folk; so that to this day—though long married—I look back to that period of innocent folly with a yearning and a regret, the sorer for this, that when I try to analyse the happiness I enjoyed, I fail, and make nothing of it. That all things should be changed for me, and I be changed in my own eyes—so that I walked a head taller and esteemed myself ridiculously—by the fact that a kitchen wench in a drugget petticoat and clogs had let me kiss her, and left me to believe that she loved me, seems incredible now; as incredible as that a daily glimpse