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CHAPTER II

LATER in the day Mr. Dick Lechmere was asking himself the same question: "What is behind that mask?"

He and Petrina were together on the veranda. Tea was over, and Mrs. Faneuil had taken Vassall to a spot on the hill-side where the view was specially fine. Petrina and her guest sat beside the disordered tea-table, talking as people do who have frequented the same society, seen the same places, and done the same things. But there was already something more in their conversation. There was a note of sympathy, a sense of something held in common.

"This man," said Petrina to herself, "has sounded the depths and the heights of experience. His hand has swept *toute la lyre* of life. It is what I should like to do."

"What is behind that mask?" Lechmere kept asking silently. "Shall I ever know?"

For, looking at Petrina, he acknowledged that her face was not easy to read. It was not unexpressive, but it showed its expression rarely; it was mobile but inscrutable.

He knew women well; he had formed an almost scornful habit of classifying them at sight. Here, however, he felt himself checked. As he talked idly of his fishing trip to Canada with Vassall, he was secretly admiring the proud poise of Petrina's head, the pure oval of the countenance, the refinement of the small