

lation possible between us, Diana. I cannot and I will not be your friend, or anything but your husband."

"And I cannot and I will not be your wife nor any man's wife!" cried Diana. "What! retract all I have said? Never! You would think me silly, shallow, illogical, and sneer at me for it as long as we lived."

"I never sneer at anything, and you know it, Diana," said Jerome, patiently. "And I don't think you silly or shallow, but I do think it is wrong of you to set your face like a flint against an institution which all mankind esteems admirable, honorable."

"It's not a question of all mankind, but of myself."

"During all these months that I have known you no one has kissed you, petted you, made you little gifts, watched over your health, or cared an atom about you in any way——"

"You state those mortifying facts with remorseless enjoyment!"

"Except myself. What holds you to this place, with its ceaseless suggestions of suffering and death? Marry me, Diana. Let me take you away from here and make a new home for you, a home whose very atmosphere breathes love and tenderness and peace. You have never been truly happy, dearest; let me try to make you so!"

"Oh, forgive me!" pleaded Diana. "I must refuse you, now and always!"

"Not always," said the young man, gently.

"Yes, always; just as often as you ask me. But