

THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT

"Saw how they were with you? Do you mean?—No, you can't mean!—it isn't—Drusilla?"

Since Drusilla would do as well as another, he still stood smiling. She clasped her hands. Her face was all aglow.

"Oh, I should be so glad! It's only within a few days that I've seen—how it was—with—"

He hastened to interrupt her, though he had no idea of what she was going to say. "Then so long as you do see—"

"Oh yes; I—I begin to see. I'm afraid I've been very stupid. You've been so kind—so noble—when all the while—"

"We won't discuss that, what? We won't discuss each other at all. Even if you go your way and I go mine, we shall still be—"

He didn't finish, because she dropped again to the sofa, burying her face in the cushions. It was the first time he had ever seen her give way to deep emotion. If he had not felt so strong to carry the thing through to the end, he would have been unnerved. As it was, he sat down beside her, bending over her bowed head. He made no attempt to touch her.

"I can't bear it," he could hear her panting. "I can't bear it."

"What is it that you can't bear? The pain?"

She nodded without raising her head.

"Or the happiness?" he asked, gently.

She nodded again.

"That is," he went on, "pain for me—and happiness about—about—the other chap."