

gesture the apparel spread upon the sofa. "You en' Marse Louis, sah, am erbout ob er height en' make. Miss Désirée tol' me so, en' den I see fer myself. Marse Louis's evening clothes, sah, en' some ob his linen, en' a ruffled shu't, en' er pair ob his pumps dat ar mighty ol', but yet better than yo' shoes. — Dat am de bell-cord ober dar, sah, en' ef yo' please, ring when you ready fer me ter shave you."

Downstairs the last roses of the west tossed a glow into the Cape Jessamine drawing-room. It suffused the high, bare, distinguished place, lay in carmine pools upon the floor, glorified the bowls of late flowers and made splendid the silken, heavy, old-gold skirt of Désirée Gaillard. There was a low fire burning on the hearth. She sat beside it, in an old gilt French chair, her hands resting upon the arms. Folding doors between room and hall were opened. Désirée could see the spacious, finely built stairs from the gallery landing down; thus she had fair benefit of Edward Cary's entrance. The candles had been lighted before he came. Those in the hall sconces gave a beautiful, mellow light. Désirée had made no effort to explain to herself why all the candles were lighted, and why she was wearing that one of her year-before-last Mardigras dresses which she liked the best. She rarely troubled to explain her actions, to herself or to another. All her movements were characterized by a certain imperial sureness, harmony. If she merely wished — the Southern armies being held in passionate regard by all Southern women — to do a ragged Virginia private honour; if she wished, delicately, fleetingly, half-ironically to play-act a little in the mist of flood and war; if she wished, or out of caprice or in dead earnest, to make a fairy oasis — why, she wished it! Whatever had been her motive, she possibly felt, in the moment of Edward Cary's appearance on the stair, that gown and lights were justified.

He was a man eminently good to look at. Louis Gaillard, it appeared, knew how to dress; at any rate, the apparel that Edward wore to-night became him so well that it was at once forgotten. He was clean-shaven, and Simon had much shortened the sunburnt hair.

Down the stair and across hall and drawing-room he came to her side. "Did you ever get through the thorny wood and the briar hedge in the fairy story? That's what, without any doubt, I have done!"