

A KNIGHT OF THE NETS

gather round herself the company to which she had been wont. Unpleasant rumours somehow clung to her name; no one said much about her, but she was not popular. The fine dwelling in St. George's Square had seen much gay company in its spacious rooms; but Madame found it a hopeless task to re-assemble it. She felt this want of favour keenly, though she need not have altogether blamed herself for it, had she not been so inordinately conscious of her own personality. For Archie had undoubtedly, in previous winters, been the great social attraction. His fine manners, his good nature, his handsome appearance, his wealth, and his importance as a matrimonial venture, had crowded the receptions which Madame believed owed their success to her own tact and influence.

Gradually, however, the truth dawned upon her; and then, in utter disgust, she retired from a world that hardly missed her, and which had long only tolerated her for the accidents of her connections and surroundings. Her disposition for saving grew into a passion; she became miserly in the extreme, and punished herself night and day in order that she might add continually to the pile of hoarded money which Marion afterwards spent with a lavish prodigality. Occasionally her thin, gray