

young and slight, with large dark eyes, and pale thin cheeks, a girl who seemed to have lived all her life on just the opposite side of the wall to the London beauty—the side where the sun never comes. Her fingers were small, and most delicately shaped, but her clothes were so old and faded that they told their own tale and the wearer's—a tale of poverty and privation. The poor girl seemed dazzled by the light, and all the luxurious fittings up of a room which, to Ada, appeared only barely comfortable; but after her eyes had wandered around for a few moments, she recovered herself, and opening a box she held in her hand, took out of it a rich lace veil.

"I am obliged to bring it home unfinished," she said in a low, melancholy voice, strongly marked with a foreign accent. "I cannot help it. We are in distress enough, God only knows how great, but my mother is very ill, and I have no longer any time for work."

Ada snatched the delicate fabric from the girl's hand.

"Not going to finish it!" she exclaimed. "It was promised for next Friday, and it *must* be done."

"I would willingly do it if I could," the girl replied, "but I know I cannot. I am sorry it was promised, but I did not think then that my mother was going to be ill. She was helping me to work it, but now that she is so bad I must leave everything and nurse her."

"My wedding is fixed for Thursday week," Ada said, "my dress is all trimmed with this lace, and after all it seems I am not to have the veil. It is too bad. I shall speak to-morrow to Madame Brader, who recommended you to me.

"We are in *such* distress," pleaded the girl, "we are strangers here; Madame liked our lace, and making it has kept us from starvation."

But Ada hardly heard the words—she

was turning over the veil with Mademoiselle Victorine.

"How long would it take you to finish it?" she asked abruptly.

"I should have to work hard all this next week, and I know I could not give the time. I am so sorry, but indeed, indeed it is not my fault."

"The lace is very lovely," Mademoiselle Victorine said, "and it would be a thousand pities not to get it done, more especially since the dress is trimmed with it; the effect would not be complete without it."

"It is most provoking," replied Ada, "however I shall go myself to-morrow to Madame Brader's, and tell her positively that she must do something." Then, without even glancing at the girl, Ada swept out of the room, taking the veil away with her.

Sir Henry had come in from the balcony, and was standing alone by the fire-place. Ada's father, Mr. Willingham, generally preferred the quiet of his own library after dinner, and Mrs. Stonor had gone up stairs, finding the drawing-room dull. Ada was an only child, and her mother had died when she was quite young. Her father, during his early life, had worked hard and saved money—money that he only cared about inasmuch as it enabled him to surround his idolized daughter with the luxuries that money alone can procure. He was a man of naturally quiet tastes, but he never forgot that Ada was young, so, not liking to go much into society himself, he had engaged Mrs. Stonor, a lady of undoubted respectability, as chaperone and companion.

"What is the matter?" Sir Henry asked, seeing the angry flush on Ada's face.

"I am *so* disappointed," she exclaimed, "my veil, my beautiful lace veil, which Madame Brader promised to have worked for me by some Belgian family, has just been returned unfinished. It was to match the trimmings on my white satin dress, and now all will be spoiled."