

Boodles put her head down, as if the wind had snapped her slender neck, and he kissed the hair just as he had done at different periods of her life, when she was a very small girl and the radiance was hanging down, and when she was rather a bigger girl and the radiance was up—and now. It was the best kiss of all, a man's kiss, the kiss which regenerated her and renounced all else.

"You don't know what you are saying. I am an illegitimate child. You must not give up anything for me."

Boodles had forgotten that it was the beginning of a new story. His great act of renunciation staggered her. Everything, birth, name, prospects, respectability, for her. She could not let him, but how was she to resist? She threw the sleep off, and said almost fiercely—

"You must not. The time may come when you will be sorry. I shall be a weight upon you, dragging you down. You might become ashamed of me."

"Darling, I have been true to you all my life. I will be true for the rest of it."

"I promised your parents I would not."

"You promised me, year after year, that you would."

Boodles tried to smile. She would have to be false to some one.

"I have left my father's house, and I am not going back," Aubrey went on.

"It will be terrible for them," she murmured.

"It would be worse for you and for me. They have known nothing but happiness all their lives. It is their turn to have a little trouble. They are bringing it upon themselves. I have told them I shall not go back until they are willing to receive my wife."

"They will never do that. Oh, Aubrey, you must not marry me. I shall spoil your life."

"If I lost you it would be spoilt. I am being selfish after all," he said. "And if you were left alone what would you do?"

Boodles said nothing, but the Tavy went roaring by, answering the question for her.

"I am going to take you away, darling." He was holding her tightly, and she did not resist much, perhaps because she felt she ought to give up a little to him