

definitely, for the first time, to marry me as soon as she could get about the world again. I put before her with what delicacy I could that if she had foolish ideas of my being above her in station, she was above me in worldly fortune, and thus we both had to make some sacrifices to our pride. I said that my work was found—that our lives could be regulated as she wished.

She listened, without saying a word, until I had finished. Then she took my hand.

"I'm grateful," she said, "and I'm proud. And I know that I love you beyond all things on earth. But I won't give you an answer till I'm up and about on my feet again."

"Why?" I insisted.

"Don't ask. And don't mention the matter again. You must be good to me, because I'm ill, and do what I say."

She smiled and fondled my hand, and cajoled a reluctant promise from me.

Then came days in which, for no obvious reason, Lola received me with anxious frightened diffidence, and spoke with constraint. The cheerfulness which she had hitherto exhibited gave place to dull depression. She urged me continually to leave Berlin, where, as she said, I was wasting my time, and return to my work in London.

"I shall be all right, Simon, perfectly all right, and as soon as I can travel, I'll come straight to London."

"I am not going to let you slip through my fingers again," I would say laughingly.

"But I promise you, I'll swear to you I'll come back! Only I can't bear to think of you idling around a woman's sick-bed, when you have such glorious things to do at home. That's a man's work, Simon. This isn't."

"But it is a man's work," I would declare, "to devote himself to the woman he loves and not to leave her helpless, a stranger in a strange land."