

CHAPTER XV

THE ENEMY LISTENS

IN September, her marriage to Siward excitingly imminent, Sylvia had been seized with a passion for wholesale renunciation and rigid self-chastisement. All that had been so materially desirable to her in life, all that she had heretofore worshipped, in and belonging to her own world, she now denied. Down went the miniature golden calf from the altar in her private shrine, its tiny crashing fall making considerable racket throughout her world, and the planets and satellites adjacent to that section of the social system which she had long been expected to dominate.

The spectacle of their youthful ruler-elect in sackcloth as the future bride of a business man had more than disconcerted them. The amazing announcement of Quarrier's engagement to Agatha Caithness stupefied the elect, rendering in one harrowing instant null and void the thousand petty plans and plots, intrigues and schemes, upon which future social constructions on the social structure had been based.

The grief and amazement of Major Belwether, already distracted by his non-participation, through his own fault, in Plank's consolidation of Amalgamated with Inter-County, was pitiable to the verge of the unpleasant. Like panic-stricken rabbits, his thoughts ran in circles, and he skipped in their wake, scurrying from Quarrier to Harrington, from Harrington to Plank,