

seen her hitherto in anything approaching fashionable attire; and much as he had appreciated her simplicity, the fact that a pretty woman is prettier when she is well dressed, came home to him rather forcibly.

The white cloth gown fitted her full slender figure closely, and she wore violets at her pretty white throat and in her shady black hat.

"I am very glad to meet you, Cousin Denis, for I have had a letter from the Duchess, and I want to ask you about it."

Now the Duchess was down at Challonsleigh at this moment, and Denis was keeping house in Park Lane by himself, so that this intelligence startled him very much.

Jeanne explained.

"It is a very kind letter; asking me to go and stay with her for Easter; and I think it must be because Louis knew your brother, Lord Dermot Liscarney, at Sandhurst; for Louis said in his last letter that he had written to him. Do you think I ought to go?"

She wondered why he was so slow to answer.

He was looking away from her when his reply came, in words even more carefully measured than usual.

"There can be no possible reason why you should not go."

"But shall you be there?" she asked, wistfully. "I should be afraid to go if you were not there. Even with you to help me I am afraid I might make many mistakes and do ridiculous things without meaning to."

The Duke's face cleared, and he spoke with more boyish heartiness than was his wont.

"Of course I shall be there; and you could not be ridiculous if you tried."

"But oughtn't I just to explain to the Duchess that I was brought up in a farmhouse, so that she should know what to expect," said scrupulous Jeanne. "After all, I have never stayed anywhere in my life, except in Pen-y-waun Rectory when it was too wet to go backwards and forwards to Coed-