

line that you can no more define them than you could the message which some blossom, blooming in a wild, far place, has for the human heart as you stoop over it to drink its perfume, and gloat upon its beauty. But you ask me to be definite: will you take offence, if, upon some points which present themselves to me, I become *quite* definite?’

‘Not by any means, Mr. Gray. I am very anxious to hear everything that you have to say.’

‘Well, Aster, I do not admire your friend, Mr. Ham. I think he is a coarse snob; and under an exterior of brusque frankness I believe he is deceitful and—cowardly. I should consider your union with such a person a monstrous sacrifice.’

‘Would you have me wait until some man who reaches your ideal came and asked father for my hand? Or would you have me advertise in William Lyon Mackenzie’s newspaper. Or, still another and final alternative, would you have me bloom in this sweet place all my days in celibacy?’

‘I simply would not have you marry that person, Ham.’

‘No other definite wish with respect to me?’ Her head was bowed now, and her mischievous, upward glance was very fascinating.

‘I have; but I should prefer for the present to keep it to myself.’

