

vividly of simple little Estella as now. Those flowing curls were all that was needed to make the resemblance complete.

He stood and looked at her, dazed, stunned. Dressed as a bride—what did it mean?

"Monsieur stands entranced!" she said, gayly, coming forward. "Speechless with admiration, no doubt. How surprised you must have been this afternoon, upon receiving my note!"

"I have lived in a state of perpetual surprises of late," he answered; "the power to wonder at anything is fast leaving me. But if it is not impertinent, I should like to know what *that* dress means?"

"What it says—that I am a bride!"

He stood motionless as death.

"A bride!" he repeated, in a sort of whisper—"a bride!"

"A happy bride, monsieur!" She came close to him, the delicate cheeks flushed, the starry eyes shining. "But you—you do not ask for your wife, and I told you she was here."

That smile—that radiant face! Some dim perception of the glorious truth dawned upon him. He caught his breath, his brain turning giddy.

"For God's sake, speak!" he cried, hoarsely. "I think I am going mad!"

She held out both lovely hands—ringless save for one plain circlet of gold—the beautiful face luminous with love, and light, and joy.

"Nay, you are sane at last," she said. "Oh, Alwyn, Alwyn! *don't* you know me?"

And then the scales fell from his eyes, and he knew the truth—the bewildering, delirious truth! His wife stood before him!

"Estelle!"

He could utter no more—the room and everything in it was literally spinning round before the strong man's eyes.

"Estelle, no more—Estella Bartram, your wife! Oh, blind, blind, blind that you have been, not to have known long ago! Estelle De Montreuil no longer, but your little Essie, my darling husband, if you will forgive me and take me back!"

She threw herself upon his breast, in a sudden paroxysm