

ESMERALDA

Of course, it was I who held back her chair; but somehow—I cannot yet see how, for he had been quite on the other side of the table—when she dropped her handkerchief, a perfectly astonishing large silk one, it was Captain Tugwell who restored it to her.

He did it very gravely, having abruptly relapsed into his habitual silence, but he looked straight at her, and somehow I could not but feel that something was said, though I'm certain no word was spoken. Then Marjorie distracted him with the reminder of some engagement and the ladies left the room.

Though I admire the good old English custom of leaving the gentlemen to their wine and am glad to say that it is maintained at the DeWynts, still I always prefer to leave when the dear ladies do, as I am not a partaker of alcoholic stimulants; and this evening I made no exception to the rule. Besides, I had a feeling that I ought, as it were, to watch over Miss Esmeralda — she having been put into my charge by Mrs.