

by her grandmother, Lady Bellairs. Fay tried to please him, as was her wont with all except men with beards. She liked to have him in attendance. Her violet eyes lighted up with genuine pleasure when he came to see her.

It is perhaps difficult for the legions of women who do not please easily, and for the handful whose interests lie outside themselves, and who are not desirous of pleasing indiscriminately, to realise the passionate desire to please which possesses and saps the life of some of their sisters. Admiration with them is not a luxury, any more than a hot-water bottle is a luxury to the aged, or a foot-rest to a gouty foot. It is a necessity of life. After a becoming interval, the interstices of which had been filled with flowers, the duke proposed to Lady Bellairs for Fay's hand. Fay did not wish to marry him. He was not in the least her ideal. Neither did she wish to remain unmarried, neither did she wish to part with her grave, distinguished suitor, who was an ornament to herself. And she was distinctly averse to living any longer in the paternal home, lost in a remote crease in a Hampshire down. Poor women have only too frequently to deal with these complicated situations, with which blundering, egotistic male minds are seldom in perfect sympathy.

Fay had never willingly relinquished any of the men who had cared for her—and some had cared much. These last had, as a rule, torn themselves away from her, leaving hearts, or other fragments of themselves, behind, and were not to be cajoled back again, even by one of her little gilt-edged notes. But the duke did not break away. He had selected her, she pleased him, he desired to marry an Englishwoman, he had the approval of Lady Bellairs.