

room, where never the light of the sun could enter. Behind the bars of their little bigotries and their little prejudices, this poor untamed creature was beating her tired wings, or she was sitting there waiting with watching eyes for him to return and marry her.

It was not the manner of his telling that made the story real. It was the place. That glare of lights, those sinuous sounds of music that crept upon one's ears, all the blatant artificiality of it, and this casual narrative told with a laugh and a glass to the lips! You hear strange conversations in public places; but I had never heard anything more strange than this.

Her father was wealthy, so it seemed. It was this that had attracted him to the match.

"She'll have ten thousand, when we marry," he continued; "worth thinking about, you know. And more when her father dies. But there's one ghastly drawback. I got used to it over there; but since I've been back in England—talking, for instance, to women like yourself—I sometimes wonder how the devil I'm going to do it."

I held my breath and strained my ears to listen. It is when you know what is coming that you are keenest of all to hear.

"You don't mean to say she's black?" said his companion, in horror.

Back went his head and he laughed right down my spine.

"Good Lord! No! You don't think any amount of money would tempt me to marry a black, do you?"