

She looked at him a moment, seeming to consider.

"Perhaps," she said at last. "But don't over-do that. Don't be cruel."

"Cruel?" There was strong surprise in his voice and on his face.

"Yes, cruel. Have you ever troubled to think what she may be feeling?"

"I don't know that I ever have," Harry admitted slowly. "At first sight it looks as if I were the person who might be supposed to be feeling."

"At first sight, yes. Is that always to be enough for you, Mr. Tristram? If so, I shan't regret so much that I haven't—lots of time."

He stood silent before her for several seconds.

"Yes, I see. Perhaps. I daresay I can find out something about it. After all I've given some evidence of consideration for her."

"That makes it worse, if you give none now. Good-bye."

"It's less than a fortnight since I first met her. She won't miss me much, Lady Evenswood."

"Time's ev-rything, isn't it? Oh, you're not stupid! Think it over, Mr. Tristram. Now good-bye. And don't conclude I shan't think about you because it's only an hour since we met. We women are curious. When you've nothing better to do it'll pay you to study us."

As Harry walked down from her house in Green Street, his thoughts were divided between the new life and that old one which she had raised before his eyes by her reference to Cecily. The balance was turned in favour of Blent by the sight of a man who was associated in his mind with it—Sloyd, the house-agent who had let Merriion Lodge to Mina Zabriská. Sloyd was as smart as usual, but he was walking along in a dejected way, and his hat was unfashionably far back on his head. He started when he saw Harry approaching him.

"Why, it's——" he began, and stopped in evident hesitation.