

loved another, and a great dark loneliness settled down upon my heart ; but the night we said good-bye, our eyes met, my soul went out to yours, my whole being was inflamed and I went home intoxicated with hope, saying over and over to myself, 'Yes, she will love me ; she must love me. I'll win her yet ; I'll conquer her heart ; I'll call her mine.' From that very hour, you, my dearest one, have never been absent from my thoughts, waking or sleeping I have thought and dreamed of you and loved you with all the devotion of my heart. This is why to-night, half insane, I told you that I hoped to be married in the spring-time when the swans returned, and I have hoped it, yes, so long and earnestly. Perhaps to-night I should not have spoken, but my heart refused to be silent ; I could not wait, I had to speak, I had to tell you. Answer me, tell me, if it is possible that you can ever return my love."

Drawing nearer to him, she responded, "I have always loved you," and the face she raised to his was transfigured with a brightness such as no artist was ever able to describe.

He clasped her in his arms and their lips met in a tender embrace.

Then followed the happiest days of their lives.