

ma belle ! come to me, my darling, and tell me what has happened ? ”

She saw that his recognition of her was mingled with real confusion and distress, and the thought rushed into her heart, that she had been cruel to him, and with a feeling of utter abandonment to love, she leant her head upon his breast, and in soothing tones she murmured :

“ Listen, and I will explain, Ieuan. I have planned and longed for this hour ever since I first met you in London. I have deceived you for months and months. Oh ! Ieuan, to think that you did not know me ! You thought I was another woman, and you forgot Mifanwy for her, and I was jealous of myself, and vowed to bring you back to me—as Mifanwy. It was I, Mifanwy, who sang in the London concerts—who listened to the ring-dove with you at Lady Meredith’s ball. It was I, Mifanwy, called in London La Belle Russe, whom you said you loved.”

“ Oh heavens ! ” cried Ieuan, clasping her in his arms, “ this is too great happiness ; but tell me, tell me, Belle, my darling ! Mifanwy, my beloved ! how have you managed to deceive me for so long ? How could I have been such a fool ? And yet—I was not—I was not wholly deceived ; all along I felt a mysterious strength in the bonds that drew me to you ; now all my sleepless nights, my unsettled mind, my strange emotions, my self-reproaches, are accounted for.”

“ Poor fellow, poor fellow ! I begin to feel myself a culprit. And for all these cruelties that I have inflicted upon you, how will you punish me ? ”

“ I told you I was a hard man at a bargain,” he replied, “ and now I demand for every cruelty—a kiss. First—my unsettled mind.”

“ Oh ! count them all up at once then, and one kiss will do.”

“ Not a bit of it ; first my unsettled mind, a kiss for that—then my sleepless nights, another for them—then my self-reproaches, two for them.”