

ry Sefton was by her side. Young, handsome, and distinguished in appearance, he was, to a looker-on, a man in every way fitted to wed the woman he had chosen. As they stood together on that June evening, he bending over her, whilst her beautiful face was lifted up to his with an expression of infinite love and trust, it seemed that nothing was wanting to insure their future happiness.

"How late you are," she said, after one of those long silences that are more eloquent than words.

"I have been dining in Bryanstone Square. I would not have gone, but I remembered that I was asked to meet some particular people, and that my Conservative interests required the sacrifice."

"You call it a *sacrifice*," she replied with a low musical laugh, "in the same way, perhaps, that I consider balls a part of my duty to society; and yet I gave up a ball to-night for you."

"You don't repent, Ada; you don't wish to be surrounded by admirers night after night, and never to be alone with me?"

"Of course I don't, but when we are married I can reform."

"Ada, when we are married I shall have the greatest pride in taking you out—in feeling that all men admire you, and knowing that you are mine."

She shrank back a little as he drew her vehemently towards him. Her life had hitherto been too full of sunshine and pleasure for her to pause much in order to define a serious feeling; but a sensation, as nearly approaching to pain as she had ever known since her engagement, came over her at that moment.

"You love me for myself, Henry," she said, "not for what you call my beauty?"

"I love you," he replied, "as you love me, because we were made to love each other; because we should not have fulfilled our destiny if we did not. Everything about

you is beautiful and loveable to me; I cannot separate you from yourself."

She put her hand in his, those soft white fingers on which the diamond rings he had given her flashed and sparkled, and then she leant her head against his arm and whispered something in a low voice, and he raised her hand and held it to his lips, answering her in the same tone. And so the short remainder of the evening went by. Presently the lace curtains were again drawn aside, and the butler, with the respectful air, and in the well modulated accents those functionaries know so well how to assume, requested leave for a young woman to speak to Miss Willingham on particular business.

"Say I am engaged, Palmer," his mistress said, "and at *this* hour I can see no one."

Her face flushed angrily as she spoke, and beautiful as she still looked, the expression she had worn a minute before was quite gone, and she was a proud, haughty, spoilt beauty once more. The man withdrew in silence, but only a few minutes elapsed before another interruption came, in the form of Miss Willingham's maid, Mademoiselle Victorine. She made a thousand apologies for her intrusion, but the young person was so anxious to speak to Miss Willingham, that at last she had been obliged to give way and bring the message.

"What is it she wants," exclaimed Ada—"I will not see her."

"She has brought your veil."

"Oh! indeed. I did not guess it was that. I will go immediately. Stay where you are, Henry, and I will be back in a few minutes. I am longing to see my veil."

And leaving Sir Henry standing in the balcony, Ada passed into the brilliantly lighted drawing-room, and, followed by Mademoiselle Victorine, went up stairs to her own room. At first she did not see the girl who was waiting in it, but when Mademoiselle had lit the wax candles on the dressing tables, the girl stood revealed. She was