

As Hewitt busied himself (more reckless of cost than ever) in rendering the morning-room a perfect bower of spring blossom, that the background of courtship might not be wanting; so did the old woman lie awake at night plotting and planning white muslins, mauve chiffons, and violet velvet; as suitable at once to maiden modesty and ducal dignity.

"He is only waiting for her brother to come home," she thought; and the whole household was of the same mind.

The irreproachable character of the suitor—the poverty of his exchequer—the wildness of his brothers—all these facts were perfectly well known to the aged and unsuspected guardians of the lonely lady's interests; and she was at a loss to account for the daily increasing deference with which she was now treated.

Few of the family secrets of the great are unknown to gentlemen of Hewitt's profession; and his friend and crony, the solemn major-domo of the Duchess's house in Park Lane, was as well aware as Hewitt himself how often his Grace went to tea at No. 99 Grosvenor Square.

But that his Grace was loved, and his Grace's mother very heartily disliked, by her household, the news would assuredly, through her maid, have come to the august ears of the Duchess. But as it was, there was not a scullion in the ducal establishment who would have thwarted the Duke's pleasure, to please his mamma; and Denis pursued his tranquil way without a suspicion of the interest with which his comings and goings were regarded.

He met Jeanne walking in the park, on a sunny afternoon in early April, as he was passing Grosvenor Gate, and wondering whether it were too soon to call upon her again.

For the first time he turned and walked with her.

Dunham fell behind respectfully, devoting her attention to the breathless waddling Yorkshire terrier; and congratulating herself that her young lady was wearing her new white gown.

Jeanne's dress was simple enough, but the Duke had never