

"Well, it seems, my dear fellow, that you can do so. At least, that is the opinion that has been arrived at by the experts who have communed over her case."

Jim's heart beat painfully.

"Tell me what I can do," he said rather hoarsely, "for the best, the truest-hearted, the most absolutely genuine girl in the world."

"You can marry her."

"Marry her?" said Jim, weakly.

"Yes, in the afternoon of April the First, at Saint Sepulchre's Church."

"But——" said Jim.

"The oracle of Hill Street thinks the First of June is preferable, because there will be more people in town, and the presents are likely to be more numerous. But personally I agree with Mrs. Lascelles and *mon père* that April is as good a time as any other for visiting the Prado."

"But——" said Jim.

"I forget the inn I stayed at when I was last at Madrid. It was 'El' Something, and for some obscure reason it had no aspirate. But one Ford is the authority for Spain, although, to be sure, a certain Borrow wrote a famous work upon the subject. By the way, we must not overlook one important argument in favour of June."

"What is it?" said Jim, mechanically.

"It is hardly right to expect a new mauve to make its *début* on the First of April. Yet there seems no help for it. No ceremony could possibly be considered complete without it."

"Am I to understand——?" said Jim, who stopped with ridiculous abruptness right in the middle of his question.

"By the way, my dear fellow, I have taken the