

black car; the little pony carriage overturned in the white road, the dark, evil face of the car's owner, and the pitiful face of the woman lying on the grass by the roadside; all these flashed before his mind like the slides of a kaleidoscope. And again he murmured under his breath, "the irony of fate." It would seem that Divine justice had done what human justice had failed to do. No efforts made by Giles himself to trace the man who had stolen little Sylvia, had been successful. Muller—alias Prince Damansky—alias how many other names it was impossible to say—had vanished from the ken of his world. Rumour occasionally located him here or there, now in Berlin, now in Paris, Monte Carlo, and even Rome, but the elusive rumours were never verified, and although Mrs. Cardew now and again received letters from Grace, they never gave any address, and the post mark, if followed up, proved as elusive as rumour. And now the man was fatally injured, perhaps even dead, and Grace in all probability a widow. But to Giles' own immense astonishment that last reflection aroused in him no keener emotion than if he had suddenly learnt of the widowhood of some casual acquaintance. Grace had killed his love, killed it completely and entirely on the day when his belief in her died.

"Poor soul," was all he said to himself now, "poor soul."

Those same words rose to Hugh Berners' lips when he, in his English home, read the account of the motor tragedy, and gently broke to his wife the tidings of what had occurred.

"Oh, Hugh!" she exclaimed, "if she loves Hermann as I love you, I am sorry for her. She behaved horribly, treacherously to Sir Giles, but she loved Hermann; I am sorry for her now. To see one's man die a dreadful death, oh! Hugh."

"I don't want to say she deserves all she has got," answered Hugh grimly, "but when I think of poor Sir Giles' stricken face at the time of her elopement with that man, I can't feel much sympathy for her. And you can hardly expect me to sympathize with the man who did his best to kill you," he added, with a smile.

"Now that I am so happy, I feel as if I wanted to forgive all the world," she said, putting her hand into her husband's, as he leant over the armchair in which she sat, "and, Hugh, I can't help remembering that in spite of everything that has happened since, he was good to me when I was little, and—my mother loved him."

"He didn't repay her love in a way that commends itself to me," was the stern retort. "He made a fool of you, and then, directly you acted against his wishes, he was ready to have you put out of the way. I can't feel a grain of pity for him."

"But you must let me go and see him," Rosa answered, pulling herself upright in the armchair, and looking up into Hugh's amazed face. "Yes, wait a minute before you say anything, my darling. I never want to go against your wishes, or do anything you don't like, never—never. But I feel—I can't tell you how strongly I feel—that I must go and see Hermann before he dies."

"I shall certainly not hinder you if you feel you ought to do this thing, but I confess I don't quite understand your strong feeling about it."

"I don't understand it myself," she replied, with another puzzled drawing together of her brows. "Only I feel that I must see Hermann before the end comes. Something calls me to him—I must go." Under the circumstances Hugh Berners was far too wise a man to oppose his wife, and leaving his work for a few days in the hands of a colleague, he escorted Rosa to the little town ringed round by its fertile meadows and blue mountains, in the sunny land of Savoy. There was no difficulty in discovering the whereabouts of the man they had come to see. The accident had made Prince Damansky the centre of interest in the little town, and Hugh and Rosa were driven at once to the hotel in which the Prince lay.

Rosa immediately despatched a note to the Damanskys' apartments, and the servant who took it returned in a few minutes with the message that Madame la Princesse would see the English lady without delay, and Rosa was escorted



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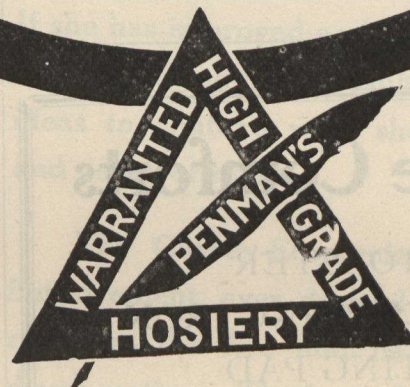
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