

"You don't know what you are saying," says the professor, driven beyond his self-control. "You are a mere child, a baby, you speak at random."

"What!" cries she, flashing round at him, "will you deny that I have been a trouble to you, that you would have been thankful had you never heard my name?"

"You are right," gravely. "I deny nothing. I wish with all my soul I had never heard your name. I confess you troubled me. I go beyond even *that*, I declare that you have been my undoing! And now, let us make an end of it. I am a poor man and a busy one, this task your father laid upon my shoulders is too heavy for me. I shall resign my guardianship; Gwendoline—Lady Baring—will accept the position. She likes you, and—you will find it hard to break *her* heart."

"Do you mean," says the girl, "that I have broken yours? *Yours*? Have I been so bad as that? Yours? I have been wilful, I know, and troublesome, but troublesome people do not break one's heart. What have I done then that yours should be broken?" She has moved closer to him. Her eyes are gazing with passionate question into his.

"Do not think of that," says the professor, unsteadily. "Do not let that trouble you. As I just now told you, I am a poor man, and poor men cannot afford such luxuries as hearts."

"Yet poor men have them," says the girl in a little low stifled tone. "And—and girls have them too!"

There is a long, long silence. To Curzon it seems as if the whole world has undergone a strange, wild upheaval.