

For John Cheston was very proud of his mother. As she paused a moment by the table he looked at her with affectionate admiration.

She was of medium height and very slim: in the softened light it might almost have been a girl standing there. Her face was oval and very pale. Isabel always called Mrs. Cheston's eyes pathetic: the soft hair which had been very dark, almost black, was now powdered with white, but despite this white-touched hair and the shadows round the eyes Olivia Mary Cheston looked quite young. She was dressed in black, a thin clinging gown bordered with fur and wore a rope of splendid pearls.

"Isn't that a lamb of a gown, Jack?" enquired Isabel.

She herself was very tall, one of the later type of girls with fine limbs and a charming complexion: without being pretty she was certainly attractive.

The young man laughed. "You look good enough to eat, mother! Really, I feel like a miser keeping you shut away here in this dull old house."

"I am so happy here," his mother answered, "don't take me away, just yet;" and then she laughed. "I've always promised Belle that I will go to London and help her choose her trousseau when the time comes . . . Don't stay in here too long, Jack," she added, as she slipped her hand through Isabel's arm and they moved away.

But John Cheston declared he did not want to smoke so they all went across the hall to the drawing-room, a room fragrant with flowers, dainty and cosy and companionable.

"I won't
our's?" Isabel

She stooped
smells so sweet

"I am going
another place
across the road

"Come and
man.

He tossed
as she obeyed
deepened in
to feel shy
had been here
remember, Jack
than she did
night she was
as she felt her

"I was sure
she said. "I
leave again so

"I came to
"Thanks,
come straight

He shook
"No: I have
Angus and I
suppose he has

There was
"Not to me
of course he
mother hasn't