

the scene was abruptly
s most untoward ending
to witness. Argyll's
state of deep contrition

shocked and excited by
which quickly gained
as dying, that tearful
heard in all directions.
stated by the medical
luckily present, that
h the body, had there-
ssarily fatal wound, was

would by no means
'Without doubt it
eliac axis had been
m blood-vessel had
artery had been torn
contraction, he trusted
when further loss of
favourable symptoms
any moment. At
n. Quiet—that is,
n no exciting visits,
good nursing, a dis-
ahem—hoped for.'
with all the aids that
e, could bring, was
Wilfred Effingham's
opular practitioner
he anxious inhabit-
having, as he had
t occurred to the
r blood-vessel had,
being torn by the
closure. In point
ment. He would
atient was border-
two he would be
ere doubtless his

youth, temperate habit, and excellent constitution would combine to produce a complete recovery.'

These agreeable predictions were fulfilled to the letter. Yet was there another element involved in the case, which was thought to have exercised a powerful influence, if, indeed, it was not the chief factor in his recovery. The vision of sudden death which had passed before the eyes of the guests at Badajos had surprised the secret of Vera Fane's heart. Of timid, almost imperceptible growth, the faint budding commencement of a girl's fancy had, all in silence and secrecy, ripened into the fragrant blossom of a woman's love. Pure, devoted, imperishable, such a sentiment is proof against the anguish of non-requital, the attacks of rivalry, even the ruder shocks of falsehood or infidelity. Let him, then, to whom, all unworthy, such a prize is allotted by a too indulgent destiny, sacrifice to the kind deities, and be thankful. It may have been—was doubtless—urged by Miss Fane's admirers, that 'that fellow Effingham was not half good enough for her, more especially after his idiotic affair with Christabel Rockley'; but, pray, which of us, to whom the blindly swaying Eros has been gracious, is not manifestly overrated, nay, made to blush for shortcomings from his early ideal?

So must it ever be in the history of the race—were the secrets of all hearts known. Let us be consoled that we are not conspicuously inferior to our neighbours, and chiefly strive, in spite of that mysterious Disappointment—poor human nature—to gain some modest eminence. Let Wilfred Effingham, then, enjoy his undeserved good fortune, *comme nous autres*, assured that with such companionship he will be stronger to battle for the right while life lasts.

'How could you forgive me?' he said, at the close of one of the happy confidences which his returning strength rendered possible. 'I should never have dared to ask you after my folly.'

'Women love but once—that is, those who are worthy of the name,' she said softly. 'I had unwisely, it would seem, permitted my heart to stray. It passed into the possession of one who—well, scarce valued sufficiently the simple offering. But you do *now*, dearest, do you not? I will never forgive you, or rather, on second thoughts, I *will* forgive you, if hereafter you love any other woman but me.'