

time to time her husband stayed with her for a few days, but life in the shabby old pallazzo was more than he could endure.

The youngest child was born when they were apart and in giving birth to her second son the mother lost her own life. Then it was that Nigel Ambrose set his will against his wife's people. He carried away his children but not before great harm had been done, especially to Silvia.

The girl's nature had been influenced all for the wrong at the most receptive period of her life. She was wholly undisciplined and amazingly ignorant: even now, though she had had successive governesses, she wrote a very childish and unformed hand and was scornfully indifferent to knowledge of all kinds; but she was very beautiful: and to-night Helen seemed to find a new loveliness in her.

"I must bother about you a little bit, honey," she said wistfully. "Don't you feel that yourself?"

Silvia turned round and tossed off her fur cap. She wore her hair parted on her brows and drawn almost over her ears, being coiled in a large classical knot at the back of her head.

"I don't know what you feel and I don't care either," she said. Then she turned round and her eyes flashed. "Please, *please* don't begin to be sentimental. It won't make a scrap of difference. I should think you ought to know by this time how much value I set on your opinion and feelings."

She looked hardly at her stepmother as she spoke. If her mind had been less narrow and prejudiced she must have been touched by the expression of Helen

Ambrose's. The charm of the attractive in father's wife, woman, that most becoming girl's heart.

"Are you way."

"I am going to say, Silvia."

There was again in a low voice "Do you know I have been told that I do what is right."

Silvia answered "don't care," she said.

"But it's Helen answered, "suppose it's possible about."

Silvia walked to the drawer and then leaned against it.

"You can't sneer, "no," her father would be so unhappy if you wanted, you supposed it for you I think."