

If she had wished for a summary and unquestioning wooing she had her desire. She was certainly given as little opportunity as she had inclination for hesitation or denial; and during those first blessed moments when they clung together in that silence which is joy's 'perfectest herald' and in the full and confessed assurance that to each the other was all, she as well as he tasted that one earnest of Heaven that is permitted on earth.

'My queen, my goddess, my life's one idol!' he said when he could let her go enough to look into her face. 'Mine now, to have and to hold forever! Tell me, am I too daring in believing I have won you? Have I very deeply and presumptuously sinned? But not now, any more than in my humility do I beg forgiveness—for if you think I need it it would be no use to ask.'

She laughed, the low, happy ripple in which a woman's fulness of joy runs over. 'You are very masterful—"very vilely proud," I think; but I believe if you were more humble I could not care for you.'

'Ah, I know you care! I can see now, though I have been a blind fool; and you cannot close my eyes again. I know it—but tell me so once more.'

But, for all answer, she hid her face.

'Do you know what you are doing?' he asked presently. 'I can give you an unstained name,—' a sudden little catch in his breath showed that one word had come unaware, and she clung to him the closer—'but most of what once went with it was given freely and gladly in a lost cause, and the little that remains is devoted to those who need it more than I. Can you be content with what my hands and brains can do for you? Not that I mean