

will be twenty-three in April; the position has changed. I no longer come in. She must decide for herself."

"Mr. Lawton," I cried, suddenly thrilled, my tongue thick in my mouth with excitement.

He raised his open hand, and it was the first time I had ever seen him do anything so histrionic :

"She is free. I neither consent nor refuse. She has her freedom and she has her responsibility. I will not interfere, for—it is not my business."

Understanding irradiated my mind. Here was the Englishman, the *beau idéal* of his type : his daughter was of age, was free, free to be happy and free to be wretched; the fate of other free individuals was not his business. And I wondered whether I loved this sumptuous English freedom or hated its cold aloofness.

"Thank you," I said, unconsciously imitating his attitude.

He did not reply, but as I turned towards the door, the sportsman said, detachedly :

"Don't go yet. Come upstairs and see them; my wife would be sorry to miss you."