

THE DIVINE FIRE

property that ought to have been his. And he could not have married any woman who would have suspected him of such brutality. He could only marry a woman who was consummately suitable to him, in whom nothing jarred, nothing offended ; and his cousin Lucia was such a woman. The very fact that she was his cousin was an assurance of her rightness. It followed that, love being the expression of that perfect and predestined harmony, he could only marry for love. Not for a great estate, for Court House and the Harden Library. No, to do him justice, his seeking of Lucia was independent of his reflection that these things would be added unto him. Still, once married to Lucia, there was only Sir Frederick and his infernal fiddle between him and ultimate, inviolable possession ; and Sir Frederick, to use his own phrase, had "about played himself out." From what a stage and to what mad music !

From the east wing came the sound, not of his uncle's fiddle, but of the music he desired, the tremendous and difficult music that, on a hot July afternoon, taxed the delicate player's strength to its utmost. Lucia began with Scarlatti and Bach ; wandered off through Schumann into Chopin, a moonlit enchanted wilderness of sound ; paused, and wound up superbly with Beethoven, the "Sonata Appassionata."

And as she came back to him over the green lawn she seemed to Jewdwine to be trailing tumultuous echoes of her music ; the splendour and the passion of her playing hung about her like a luminous cloud. He rose and went to meet her, and in his eyes there was a light, a light of wonder and of worship.

"I think," she said, "you do look a little happier."

"I am tolerably happy, thanks."

"So am I."

"Yes, but *you* don't look it. What are you thinking of ?"

She turned, and they walked together towards the house.

"I was thinking—it's quite cool, now, Horace—of what you said—about that friend of yours."

"Lucy ! Was I rude ? Did I make you unhappy ?"

"Not you. Don't you see that it's just because I'm happy that I want to be kind to him ?"