



THE HALL DOOR, LINCOLN INN



THE LAST OF OLD LONDON

and ran the risk of arrest, imprisonment and disgrace, to see London again. She had never treated him well. He had known only a shabby mean existence beside the Thames. But a smell of fog and a glimpse of a yellow lamp through the murk, had stirred the toxin, and he answered. They come back to her from ten thousand places, and you meet them in the five-shilling promenade of the Empire, or at the Savage Club, or the Bath Club, down in Billingsgate public houses, idling in Kew Gardens, working a barge across the pool of London—military men, clerks, foreign agents, sailors, criminals, wanderers. London neither welcomes them nor rejects them; does not rejoice with them if they have prospered, nor condole with them for their misfortunes. If they fall she pays no heed, nor if they rise. They love her with the still, quiet passion of men who continue to love when they secretly know that there is neither hope nor friendship nor mercy to be had for their pains.

I doubt if she holds any more for

a victorious general returning from Egypt or India than she holds for the outcast from society. Indeed, it would be inconsistent with her indifference if she did. Men may light the city with gay colours and send regiments and brass bands marching from Marble Arch to the Bank, but these things do not make London gay. Kaisers may arrive and depart, great artists shake the foundations of the artistic world, but the Inscrutable City goes on about its own business.

So many men and women mistake London's monuments for London, that it might be said that few out of the millions who yearly visit that city have really seen even part of the great cosmopolis proper. The beauties of London architecture, softened by years of London weather, and enhanced by the atmosphere of historic importance which hovers over almost all of them, are not to be overlooked. The man who makes the journey across the Atlantic and who does not see Westminster and the Houses of Parliament, who does not pause before the entrance to the Henry VIII.