

WHAT COMES OUT IN THE FLESH 379

"Sorry. Let's talk of something else," said Deryk with heightened colour.

He was staggered to find such a reproach coming from the gentle Felix. Everybody seemed to be down on him to-day, visiting private irritability on him because he saw clearly, and they did not. And, as though he had said the most natural thing in the world, Felix was now chatting away to Idina. . .

"Tell us what the house is like," Yolande suggested in an undertone. "I don't even know how many floors or rooms you've got."

"And you don't in the least want to hear," he retorted with an open sneer for her artificial politeness.

Yolande blushed vividly.

"Indeed I do. The strain of the last few days has tired my nerves, so that I'm afraid of forgetting my manners."

At last Deryk seemed a little out of countenance.

"I don't know what's the matter with me," he whispered fiercely. "I didn't mean to be rude, but I—I can't bear myself."

When luncheon was over they walked from the Ritz to Pall Mall, and Yolande found an opportunity of warning her husband that Deryk was making every preparation for another breakdown. "He's in a state when even Dina gets on his nerves. I don't know what to do with him!"

"If he w-wants to be a T-Territorial, *let* him be," Felix urged. "The training would do him all the g-good in the world."

"I didn't mean to stop him. He'll hate it, though, and I'm afraid it's come too late for the country and for him. Oh, I wish I knew what *was* going to happen!"

At the bottom of St. James' Street they met George Oakleigh coming down the steps of the Eclectics' Club; almost unconsciously and before they had decided to speak, they were standing in a circle of five, talking with a rare intimacy unjustified by anything in their relationship.

"Quite inevitable, everybody says," reported Oakleigh. "You didn't miss much by not coming to Chepstow, Mrs.