

THE MAY
The spirit of spring is in the air.
The daffodils are dancing free
To the wind's mastery.

THE HAUNTED CHAMBER
BY THE "DUCHESS."
CHAPTER XI.—[CONTINUED]
You saw—prompts Dora, fast

As this suggestive scene with approval, they manage to convey a message to the captain, and in a very few minutes he is with them, and is made acquainted with their hopes and fears.

Turning the handle of this door, Captain Ringwood discovers that it is locked, but nothing daunted, he pulls so violently backward and forward that the lock, rusty with age, gives way and leaves the passage beyond open to them.

Even while thinking this she idly opens a book lying on the table near her, where some brushes and paint are scattered. A piece of paper drops from between its leaves and flutters to the ground. Lifting it, she sees it is the letter written to him by Dora, which the latter had brought to her, here to this very room, when asking her advice as to whether she should or should not meet him by appointment in the line-walk.

She drops the letter hurriedly, as though by very touch it stung her, and rousing herself with bitter self-contempt from her sentimental regrets, vigorously at her painting for about an hour, then, growing weary, she flings her brushes aside, and goes to the morning-room, where she knows she will find all the others assembled.

There is nobody here just now, however, except Sir Adrian, who is looking rather tired and bored, and Ethel Villiers. The latter, seeing Florence enter, gladly gives up her work and runs away to have a turn in the garden with Captain Ringwood.

With great foreboding she utters these words, accompanied in them with a look of utter dejection. How can she mistake his glance, so full of love and respect? Perplexed in the extreme, she turns from him, as though to leave him; but by a gesture he detains her.

She speaks with such full assurance of being able to bring Dora forward as a witness in his defense that Florence, for the first time, feels a strong doubt thrown upon the belief she has formed of his being a monster of wickedness.

She repeats the words, "What is it I can do for you?" asks Dora, in some confusion. Of late she has grown very shy of being alone with either him or Florence.

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