

her as a little fragile woman, with deep, large dark eyes, and the traces of a former beauty on her tired face, over which I never saw spread the flush of anger or of joy. If she was moved, the hollows of her eyes would darken in the strangest way, but that was seldom. Of her own life's history she never spoke to me; but my firm friend, the housekeeper, told me her uneventful story, so far as she knew it. Once, my mother had been the Duchess's lady's maid, and her father had been the lodge-keeper. Then my mother left the Duchess to take another situation in London; and soon after she married. After a few months of married life her husband died, and she came home to her father. And then I was born. Soon after her father also died, and she took his place as lodge-keeper.

The housekeeper would talk of Oswald without reticence and with even greater volubility—how he was the Duchess's favourite child, and what a dreadful blow it was to her when he died. On the subject of his good looks she was even eloquent. She took me once to the picture gallery and showed me his portrait.

"His eyes," she said, "were much like yours." And then I think the imprudence occurred to her of putting into a child's head