

of the accursed liquor-crave; I—well, I reckoned without my host——”

His laugh jarred her heartstrings. She cried out hotly: “You did not deceive me wilfully! You believed what you said!”

“I believed . . . and the first snare set for me tripped up my heels,” said Saxham. “I paid the penalty of being cocksure. And I had not the common decency to die then and release you. True, there were reasons—they are swept away now! . . . I sent you to Wales that I might be free of the sight of you, that I might end the sordid comedy and have done. You have come too soon! There’s no more to be said than that!”

“There is this to be said.”

She came towards him, her tender eyes wooing his. Her lips were parted, her breath came in sighs.

“What you have told me is sorrowful, but not hopeless. You were cured once—you will be cured again! And I will help you—comfort you—suffer with you and pray for you. You shall never be alone, my husband, any more!”

He was melting. His hard blue eyes had the softening gleam of tears. He stretched out his hands and took hers, holding them close. He stooped, and let his burning lips rest on the cool, fragrant flesh, and said tenderly:

“Dear saint, sweet would-be martyr, you *shall* not sacrifice your long life’s happiness to me. Rather than live on sane and sober, to see you famishing beside me for the want of Love, I would die a thousand deaths, Lynette! Try to believe it. You shall be free! You must be free, my child!”

She winced as though he had stabbed her, and cried out:

“Why do you harp continually upon your death? I will not listen to you! If I do not desire to be ‘free,’ as you term it, what barrier is there between us now?”

He said, amazed:

“What barrier? Do you ask what barrier? Your love—for that other man!”

“There is no other man!” She looked him full in the eyes now, with a lovely colour dyeing her sweet cheeks, and an exquisite quivering wistfulness about her mouth. She moved so near that her fragrant breath fanned warm