

and I don't mind a bit, because I see in his face that he loves me for myself, because he sees my heart, and——"

And suddenly in her voice there was a sharp, hissing catch, and she stopped short. For a full minute she was silent. And Artois did not speak. Nor did he move.

"I felt then, perhaps for the first time, 'the outside doesn't matter to real people.' I felt that I felt, 'I'm real, and he is real, and—and Maurice is real. And though it is splendid to be beautiful, and beauty means so much, yet it doesn't mean so much as I used to think. Real people get beyond it. And when once they have got beyond it then life begins! I remember thinking that, feeling that, and—just for a minute, loving my own ugliness. And then, suddenly, I wished there was a looking-glass in the room, that I might stand before it and see what an object I was, and then look into your face and see that it didn't matter. And I even triumphed in my ugliness. 'I have a husband who doesn't mind,' I thought. 'And I have a friend who doesn't mind. They love me, both of them, whatever I look like. It's me—the woman inside—they love, because they know I care, and how I care for them.' And that thought made me feel as if I could do anything for Maurice and anything for you: heroic things, or small, dreadful, necessary things; as if I could be the servant of, or sacrifice my life easily for, those who loved me so splendidly, who knew how to love so splendidly. And I was happy then even in sacrificing my happiness with Maurice. And I thanked God then for not having given me beauty.

"And I was a fool. But I didn't find it out. And so I revelled in self-sacrifice. You don't know, you could never understand, how I enjoyed doing the most menial things for you in your illness. Often you thanked me, and often you seemed ashamed that I should do such things. And the doctor—that little Frenchman—apologised to me. And you both thought that doing so much in the frightful heat would make me ill. And I blessed the heat, and the flies, and everything that made what I did for you more difficult to do. Because the doing of what was more difficult, more trying, more fatiguing, needed more love. And my gratitude to you for your loving friendship, and for needing me more than any one else, wanted to be tried to the uttermost. And I thought, too, 'When I go back to Maurice, I shall be worth a little more, I shall be a little bit finer, and he'll feel it. He'll understand exactly what it was to me to leave him so soon, to leave—to leave what I thought of then as my Garden of Paradise. And he'll love me more because I had the courage to leave it to try and save my friend. He'll realise—he'll realise——' But men don't! They don't want to. Or they can't. I'm