

woman," I replied, and then I tried hard to think where I had heard that excellently evasive remark before. For the moment I could not trace it. I was, moreover, too interested in what she had yet to say. "Wasn't that a good enough reason?" I added.

She shook her head as she smiled at me.

"Clarissa never wanted to go home. Do you think a woman ever wants to leave a man who has treated her as you did?"

"If she finds him as repulsive to look at as Clarissa found me," said I.

For a few steps we walked without speaking again. Then she stopped me and looked squarely in my face. There was almost that light in her eyes which I have seen in Dandy's, which I remember having seen in my mother's. I felt almost then as though I might be as other men are.

"Do you know," said she, gently, "that you're morbid about—about——"

"My ugliness."

"You can call it that if you like. You think it debars you from winning. It doesn't. It's only a handicap. I never saw any one so easy first as you must have been with Clarissa."

I gripped her arm quickly. My fingers must have hurt her, for she just winced but made no effort to draw away. It was like a mother giving her boy a hand to squeeze while he was in pain.

"How do you know this?"

"I guessed it."