

Knights Who Fought the Dragon

had foresworn marriage and wedded art; of theosophy, to which he was half a convert; of his den and its furnishings, where, in a conspicuous place, was some Chinese pottery Ray had sent him—even his speech was prettily turned and had an artistic dress; but Ray noted sadly that, with the quintessence of selfishness, it was always with himself and his aims he was engrossed. Her father's tragic death, her mother's ill-health, her recent perils or her possible future—to these he gave only a passing thought.

"Self, self, always self," she thought. "The man I loved was not this breathing marble, but a warm, human-hearted being. Like Parrhassius, I believe Frank would torture a living soul for his art. Has he not tortured me through two long, weary years? What I loved exists no more—perhaps never existed but in my imagination."

Beside her berth that night she prayed, "O God! how good thou art to have kept me from being bound through life to this egotistic idealist. I should have hated him and have writhed under the festering pain of my unbreakable fetters."

The next day she could talk to Frank calmly, even with a certain degree of naturalness.