

the Marchioness drily. "Even at its worst it is a pleasanter thing to discuss than Camelford. You can't get anything out of me, my dear. I was his next door neighbour for twenty years, and I don't believe in talking about one's neighbour."

Lady Jane stared for a moment. "But — how quaint you are! — you were married to him almost as long as that, were you not?"

"My clearest, — I may even say my dearest, — recollection of him is as a neighbour, Lady Jane. He was most agreeable next door."

Cricklewick appeared in the door.

"Count Antonio Fogazario," he announced.

A small, wizened man in black satin knee-breeches entered the room and approached the Marchioness. With courtly grace he lifted her fingers to his lips and, in a voice that quavered slightly, declared in French that his joy on seeing her again was only surpassed by the hideous gloom he had experienced during the week that had elapsed since their last meeting.

"But now the gloom is dispelled and I am basking in sunshine so rare and soft and —"

"My dear Count," broke in the Marchioness, "you forget that we are enjoying the worst blizzard of the year."

"Enjoying, — vastly enjoying it!" he cried. "It is the most enchanting blizzard I have ever known. Ah, my dear Lady Jane! This is delightful!"

His sharp little face beamed with pleasure. The vast pleated shirt front extended itself to amazing proportions, as if blown up by an invisible though prodigious bellows, and his elbow described an angle of con-