

THE ARROW OF GOLD

his friends and this new apparition was not of the to make them keep away. After that first morning always had somebody to ride at her bridle hand. Doyen, the sculptor, was the first to approach them. that age a man may venture on anything. He rode a strange animal like a circus horse. Rita had spotted him out of the corner of her eye as he passed them, putting up his enormous paw in a still more enormous glove, amiably, you know, like this" (Blunt waved his hand above his head), "to Allègre. He passes on. All at once he wheeled his fantastic animal round and comes trotting after them. With the merest casual '*Bonjour, Allègre*' he rang close to her on the other side and addresses her, hat in hand, in that booming voice of his like a deferential roar of the sea very far away. His articulation is not good and the first words she really made out were 'I am an old sculptor. . . . Of course there is that habit. . . . But I can see you through all that. . . .'

"He put his hat on very much on one side. 'I am a great sculptor of women,' he declared. 'I gave up my life to them, poor unfortunate creatures, the most beautiful, the wealthiest, the most loved. . . . Two generations of them. . . . Just look at me full in the eyes, *mon enfant*.'

"They stared at each other. Doña Rita confessed to me that the old fellow made her heart beat with such force that she couldn't manage to smile at him. And she saw his eyes run full of tears. He wiped them simply with the back of his hand and went on booming faintly. 'Thought so. You are enough to make one cry. I thought my artist's life was finished, and here you come along from devil knows where with this young friend of mine, who isn't a bad smearer of canvases—but it's marble and bronze that you want. . . . I shall finish my artist's life with your face; but I shall want a bit