

the little lady who has made us laugh so heartily to-night, to say a few words of farewell before the party breaks up. In other words I call for a speech from Signorina Gimma."

He sat down amid much applause and cries of "Hear! Hear!"

"Do. Do," clamored everyone. The Duke fixed his eyes on Gimmie. Neil, pale and quiet, watched her nervously. Did she love this man, at thirty-five, as she had loved him nearly eighteen years ago? Ah, said he to himself, a woman with such a nature only loves once. Once the gift was mine and I lost it. He has plucked the jewels from the ball. He leaned back in his chair and watched her with half-closed eyes.

"Speak to them, Ginnie," whispered Grantley. "My fate must be sealed. Tell them that this is your last week in public. I shall never ask you again to marry me or disturb the peace of our friendship, if you prefer your own career to mine."

She clasped the little portrait of her