

scarcely a laugh that denotes mirth. Eight-and-twenty—he has never found a true woman yet to his thinking, until this one came and sat down in blind adoration at his feet, and gave all her pure and loving heart and soul into his keeping—unreservedly—unquestioningly—and brought a sense of happiness with her which he had never pictured even in his dreams.

Tired of hearing that she loves him! When her love is the one thing in all the world to him. It is these words of hers that make him laugh. They seem so strange and absurd, when he knows that his whole being is full of her. So he answers her by wrapping his arms round her, and pressing fond, fervent kisses on her brow and lids and sweet tempting lips—the lips that are his, and that no other man has touched like this. He has culled their perfume and fragrance, and as he feels this to be true, each kiss that he gives and takes seems to be a link in the chain of love that binds them together.

“When do your people leave town, Zai?” he asks her, “and for how long?”

“The day after to-morrow, Carl, she answers, stifling back a sob, for Hampshire seems to be the world’s end from London, “but we shall be back in a week.”

“And who has Lady Beranger invited down to Sandilands?”

“Mr. Hamilton and Lord Delaval.”

Carlton Conway grinds his heel into the ground with impotent rage.