

"For both ; for all ; for *you!*" I cried. "There has been no one else—there never could be anyone else to fill my life, and content it."

"*To fill your life,*" he echoed. "My child, that is to throw a grave responsibility on my unsteady shoulders. It is to take your youth and beauty and bright years and bind them to my own. It is to waken womanhood to its uttermost, and yet perchance fail to satisfy the woman. Are you sure, sweetheart, that you love me enough to trust me for all your future ? I, the vagrant, the wanderer, and oft-times the Fool, who has marched in and out of your youth by sheer impudence of his own personality ?"

Then I laughed. Happily and joyously I laughed, thinking of so much, and caring so little for aught he said to his own discredit.

"You are mocking me, Rosaleen. That is not kind."

"Mocking ? Oh—but how foolish you are ! There is no one I reverence, and—and——"

"Ah ! say it, Rosaleen !"

"*Love,*" I faltered. "As I reverence and *love* you."

He threw himself at my feet, he kissed my hands, murmuring what I know not of passion and extravagance and folly. But what did it matter what he did, what he said.

It only meant—himself.

To us later, came Aunt Theresa.

"I heard you talking, Chevalier ; or was it reading ? Are you still struggling with *Teufelsdröckh?*"

He laughed gaily. "Yes," he said. "Our hero has found he possessed a heart. And more, has given it to the keeping of an Air Maiden incorporated into reality by the spell of a garden. 'Thou too mayst love and be loved,' says Fate, 'and good heavens ! what a volcanic earthquake, what an all-consuming fire was kindled !' You will find that, or words to that effect, in chapter five. The chapter on Romance."

"Thank you for nothing," said Aunt Theresa. "I do not intend to addle my brains with Carlyle."

"Ah, tell her," I whispered. "She will be so glad."

And in some fantastic and utterly indescribable manner he

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