

staring at her with big, brown, rather animal eyes. Now she turns to her with her rare and lovely smile :

"The war that is going on now began at the little village-town where I was a Convent schoolgirl. We were shut for months within the lines. But, of course, you have read the newspaper accounts of the Siege of Gueldersdorp ? I am only telling you what you know !"

Lessie laughs, and the laugh has the hard, unpleasant, mirthless little tinkle of a toy dog's collar-bell, or bits of crushed ice rattled in a champagne-glass.

"What I have good reason to know !"

Her podgy, jewelled hands are clenching and unclenching in her heliotrope chiffon lap ; there is a well-defined scowl between the black arched eyebrows, and the murky light of battle gleams in the eyes that no longer languish between their bistrated eyelids as she scans the pure pale face under the sweep of her heavily blackened lashes. She gives almost give the ruby buttons out of her ear. See it wince and quiver, and crimson into angry blush. And yet Lessie is rather amiable than otherwise in her attitude towards other women. True, she has never before met one who had the insolence to pity her to her face.

"So quite too interesting !" she says, with an exaggerated affectation of amiability, and in high, fashionable accents, "you having been at Gueldersdorp through the Siege and all. Wore you ever—I suppose you must have been sometimes—shot at with a gun ?"

The faintest quiver of a smile comes over the lovely face her grudging eyes are trying to find a flaw in.

"Often when I have been crossing the veld between the town and the Hospital, the Mauser bullets have hummed past like bees, or raised little spurts of dust close by my feet where they had hit the ground. And once a shell burst close to us, and a splinter knocked off my hat and tore a corner of her veil——"

"Weren't you in a petrified fright ?" demands Lessie.

"I was with her !"

"Who was she ?"

A swift change of sudden, quickening, poignant emotion passes over the still face. A sudden swelling of the white throat, a rising mist in the golden eyes, suggests to Lessie