

## In which this History is Ended 511

"Gad, Peter! — how should I know?" But, seeing the distress in my face, he smiled, and tendered me the letter. "She left this 'For Peter, when he awoke' — and I've been waiting for Peter to wake all the morning."

Hastily I broke the seal, and, unfolding the paper with tremulous hands read:

"DEAREST, NOBLEST, AND MOST DISBELIEVING OF PETERS, — Oh, did you think you could hide your hateful suspicion from me — from me who know you so well? I felt it in your kiss, in the touch of your strong hand, I saw it in your eyes. Even when I told you the truth, and begged you to believe me, even then, deep down in your heart you thought it was my hand that had killed Sir Maurice, and God only knows the despair that filled me as I turned and left you.

"And so, Peter — perhaps to punish you a little, perhaps because I cannot bear the noisy world just yet, perhaps because I fear you a little — I have run away. But I remember also how, believing me guilty, you loved me still, and gave yourself up, to shield me, and, dying of hunger and fatigue — came to find me. And so, Peter, I have not run so very far, nor hidden myself so very close, and if you understand me as you should your search need not be so very long. And dear, dear Peter, there is just one other thing, which I hoped that you would guess, which any other would have guessed, but which, being a philosopher, you never did guess. Oh, Peter — I was once, very long ago it seems, Sophia Charmian Sefton, but I am now, and always was, Your Humble Person,

"CHARMIAN."

The letter fell from my fingers, and I remained staring before me so long that Sir Richard came and laid his hand on my shoulder.

"Oh, boy!" said he, very tenderly; "she has told me all the story, and I think, Peter, I think it is given to very few men to win the love of such a woman as this."

"God knows it!" said I.