

*of the Beholder* did not sell in thousands—you may lead a donkey to good fiction, but you cannot make him read—but in a moderate degree it was a success even with the public; and work had an irresistible attraction in consequence.

Nevertheless, the question whether Cynthia's attitude was not perhaps the one that had become most natural to her haunted Kent with growing persistency. Had it been possible, he would have asked her. He found himself wishful of a little tenderness from the woman who had once wearied him—or from the woman who had sprung from her. She was merciful, she was charming, she drew him towards her strongly; but she talked to him as a sister might have done. The suggestion of a honeymoon in their rambles now tantalised him by its illusiveness, and he was piqued by the feeling that their intercourse was devoid even of the incipient warmth of courtship.

It occurred to him that the book that he was writing might be dedicated to her, and the idea pleased him vastly. It begot several other ideas which he indulged. Roses were transferred from a shop-window to Cynthia's bosom, and he sent to town for a story that she had said she would like to read. Her surprise enchanted him, and he wished, as her gaze rested on him, that he could surprise her oftener. The thought of the evening