

accountably weak. Come along, Ede. Listen to the romance of my life."

And when the story was finished, the Countess took his hand in hers and held it to her cool cheek. The tears were still drowning her eyes.

"Oh, you poor dear! Was that why you grew so haggard, and pale, and hollow-eyed?"

"Partly," said he, with great significance.

"And you had them in your pack all the time? You——"

"I had Sprouse's most solemn word not to touch them for a week. He is the only man I feared. He is the only one who could have——"

"May I use your telephone, Mrs. Courtney?" cried she, suddenly. She sprang to her feet, quivering with excitement. "Pray forgive me for being so ill-mannered, but I—I must call up one or two people at once. They are my friends. I have written them, but—but I know they are waiting to see me in the flesh or to hear my voice. You will understand, I am sure."

Barnes was pacing the floor nervously when his sister returned after conducting her new guest to the room prepared for her. The Countess was at the telephone before the door closed behind her hostess.

"I wish you had been a little more explicit in your telegram, Tom," she said peevishly. "If I had known who she is I wouldn't have put her in that room. Now, I shall have to move Aunt Kate back into it to-morrow, and give Miss Cameron the big one at