

ASTHORE

"And do you still want me?"

"You adorable child——"

"Do you?"

"Of course I do——" He caught her in his arms, held her close, lifted her flushed face. "Now, tell me whether you can love *me!* Tell me everything that's hidden in your mind and heart!"

"Oh, Garry," she faltered, "I do belong to you. I belong to you anyway, because you made me. And I've always been in love with you—always!—always from the very beginning of the world, *Asthore!* And now—if you want me—this way—Garry *mo veel asthore——*" Her hands crept from his breast to his shoulders; stole up around his neck. "Asthore," she murmured; and their lips met in their first kiss. Then she gravely turned her head and laid her cheek against his; and he heard her murmuring to herself:

"*Drahareen o machree, mo veel asthore!* This man—this man who takes my heart—and gives me his. . . ."

"What are you murmuring there all to yourself?" he whispered, laughing and drawing her closer. But she only clung to him passionately and her closed lids kept back the starting tears.

"What is it, dear?" he asked.

"H-happiness," she whispered, "and pride, perhaps. . . . And my love for you, Asthore!"