

Desunt Cætera

"Marry you!" he repeated, his expressive features suddenly blank, then jocular again.

"Then—what——"

And, suddenly staring into the sinister smirk, she comprehended, and turned ashy white.

Even he could not mistake the genuineness of that white horror.

"You—you d-dont understand," he stammered, his effrontery shaken. . . . "I—perhaps I didn't understand you, either. . . . But I thought—I supposed——"

His top hat fell clattering on the floor; he stooped and picked it up, lifting a redder and more impudent countenance to confront her.

"After all," he said with a sneer, "I had a right to think you knew what you were about—a girl, alone, who lives on her wits."

He hesitated, malignant now, writhing internally under her pallid contempt.

"By God!" he said, "you're nothing better than any other hired woman! I helped hire you myself." And added, between his teeth:

"You little clawing cat! I know damned well you're an adventuress, but your game is beyond me——"

He swung insolently on his heel, and found