

encircling her by a perceptible trifle. "Would n't you, sweetheart?" he demanded.

She seemed in nowise embarrassed by these overt endearments. There was indeed the dimmest suggestion in her face and voice of a responsive mood. "Really," she began, with a soft glance, half-deprecation, half-pride, bent upon the others, and with thoughtful deliberation,—"really the important thing is that he should pursue some object—have in view something that he is determined to master. Without that, he is not contented—not at his best. He should have been a soldier. He has a passion for battle in his blood. And now that he sees something he is eager to do—I am very glad. It makes it none the less acceptable that good is to come from it."

"I still maintain," said Miss Madden, interpolating her words through the task of lighting a cigarette, and contriving for them an effect of drollery which appealed to Thorpe most of all—"I shall always insist, just the same, that crime was his true vocation."

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