

beauty and her wonderful jewels, and held out her hand with a little deprecating smile.

"And so we meet again at last," she said.

He turned red and white.

"At last," he said with difficulty.

She looked more closely at him. The dreamy, poetic face had changed during those four years. She became dimly aware that he had not only grown from a youth into a man, but that some other transformation had been painfully wrought in him.

Instinctively her beaming face became grave to match his. She was slow to see what others were feeling, but quick to reflect their mood. She sighed gently, vaguely stirred in spite of herself by something—she knew not what—in her companion's face.

"It is four years since I saw you," she said. And from her lowered voice it seemed as if her life were rooted in memory alone.

"Four years," said Michael, who, promising young diplomat as he was, appeared only able to repeat, parrot-wise, her last words after her.

A pause.

"Do you know my husband?"

"I do not."

"May I introduce him to you?"

Fay made a little sign, and the duke approached, superb, decorated, dignified, with the polished pallor as if the skin were a little too tight, which is the Charybdis of many who have avoided the Scylla of wrinkles.

The elder Italian and the grave, fair, young Englishman bowed to each other, were made known to each other.

That night, as the duke drove home with his wife, he said to her in his admirable English:

"Your young cousin is an enthusiast, a dreamer,