

as a cynic. It suspects all sorts of things; but for the world and its opinion, I care not.

"Now what is your answer?" He stood up as he asked this, and confronted the young man with a fixed, questioning gaze.

But Etherington was silent. Never in his life had he been so astounded, and so at a loss what to do. His strong desire to know what this secret was which overshadowed him, overcame him for the instant, as it was natural it should. He also was not a coward, and he had no dread of entering the state of self-banishment described by the other; but he firmly believed all that Monmouth said, and between him and this shadow of his possible fate, stood the picture of Lydia Bradford. She whose personality had drawn him to this was the one woman in the world for him, and love conquered. He would give up all else, he would cut himself off from all that pertained to the Old World. He paused for a moment ere he answered; then he said:

"Tell me nothing; I have chosen; I am content."

"You have chosen as I hoped you would," said Monmouth, "and you have proved your right to know one thing—you are my nephew."

"You, my uncle?"

"Yes, that is all I can say. But before we close this subject forever, let me command you, do not delay. Go to-morrow to that girl, she will save you; she will do more for you than I can ever do. She has the magic power of youth and love and hope of the New World to lead you out of the shadow and the mystery, the terrible fate which overhangs so many of those of a