

to blow them aside distinctly marred the effect of his reply.

"Then don't (puff), don't try (puff), my (puff) own!" he whispered.

"La, Mr. Sycamore, are n't you well?" demanded Miss Chaffers, unaware of the cause of his embarrassment, but as she raised her face to look at him the irritating decoration was removed.

"As well as I ever shall be, dear one," he murmured eloquently, "until that purse—I mean, that heart—is wholly mine, my soul's own—"

At this point Mr. Sharp, in the silence becoming aware of their conversation, intervened with a gruff:

"Sycamore!"

The clerk straightened up instantly. "Sir?"

"Business!" reminded Mr. Sharp, curtly, and Sycamore reluctantly returned to his desk, secretly blowing a kiss to Selina from