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riedly. "But it is always worse for—the woman, I think."
"I don't see that; I don't indeed. You put it rather unfairly."
"To marry, just for position?"
"Yes, I know, it sounds beastly, but—"
"But what?" She has gone back to her destruction of the innocent buds by this time.
"Look here," says he earnestly, "if I found, on meeting you, that I—well, hated you for example, I wouldn't marry you if I were to lose ten times the money by my refusal. But I can't help thinking that as we are both free—Bye-the-bye," breaking off, "you are free!"
"Oh, yes; as air," breaking into a little shy laugh.
"Well, then," says he, with an evident sigh of relief, "there is not so much fear."
She glances at him.
"For you," says she. "But," she leans toward him. "But how for me? Have you," her dark, blue eyes search his anxiously, "never been in love?"
"In love?" He colors slightly. "Not in love; I may have fancied people."
"Fancied them?" She looks uncertain.
"Well, yes, liked them—in a wry."
"Once?"
This is too much for Ker. He smiles.
"Oh, half-a-dozen times," says he.
"That's better," says Hilary gravely, unmoved outwardly by his mirth, if secretly annoyed by it; "I prefer that."
"On the idea that there's safety in a multitude." He is still smiling.
"Yes," a little coldly. "But anyway you have got the best of this bargain, as I have never been in love at all!"
"Well, but neither have I," says he.
"You remember I told you that."
"Still you have 'fancied' people. I," slowly, "have never fancied anybody!"
Ker takes a step towards her, and lifting one of her hands, raises it lightly to his lips.
"Then, perhaps there is a chance for me?" says he, not ungracefully. "Will you give me a chance?"
"The whole thing is so absurd," says she ruefully. "I want to marry you, and you want to marry me, just because we shall be rich people if we do, and poor people if we don't. But once married, if we found we did not like each other—how would it be, then?"
"It is a risk certainly," says Ker, very gravely. He pauses; then looks at her. "I am content to accept it," says he.
Hilary flushes faintly. Her eyes are downcast, her lovely face is looking a little sad, a little thoughtful. All at once Ker knows that to him, at all events, it is the one beautiful face in the world.
In an impulsive fashion he takes her hand again, now holding it closely.
"Will you risk it?" asks he.
It is a proposal. He feels her hand tremble within his. Will she? Will she? She raises her eyes to his.
"There would be some time before—before—"
"Some little time—a month. You know the will is very stern."

"Well—yes," says she with a sigh. The sigh is hardly complimentary, yet Ker accepts it with an excellent grace.
"You are too good," says he with quiet earnestness.
She breaks away from him impatiently.
"I am not. And I hate myself. To consent to marry a perfect stranger, one of whom I know nothing?"
"You know, at all events, that I like beer."
"Oh, you are too bad," she frowns, but after a struggle with herself, she breaks into merry if unwilling laughter.
"There, go away," says she petulantly.
"I want to be alone."
"I may come to-morrow, however?"
"Yes—s. Yes, of course. To luncheon?"
"I'm afraid not so early as that. Mrs. Dyson-Moore has something on for to-morrow; I forget what. Some people to luncheon, anyway, but if I may come at three?"
"You may."
Her tone is a little low. Somehow, she had not liked his refusal to lunch with her. However little she may be to him, she certainly ought to be more than Mrs. Dyson-Moore.
"That is settled then," says Kerr.
"Good-by," says Hilary.
"Good-by." He takes her proffered hand and holds it. "This is mine!" questions he, tightening his fingers over it.
Hilary makes a little affirmative gesture. A most unsatisfactory one.
"You will be my wife?" asks Ker, more decisively this time. He had disliked that silent assent.
"I will." Her answer now is distinct enough, anyway, if ideally cold.
Ker, after a second's examination of her face, stoops and presses his lips to her cheek. It is the calmest kiss on record, yet he has the satisfaction of

seeing that it touches her. She grows, indeed, crimson. She draws back from him. It is true, with a little offended gesture, but in doing so she lets him see her eyes. They are full of tears, and a little, quick surprise and indignation, and a new sweet suspicion of shame, but nothing at all of horror, or shrinking, or dislike.
(To be Continued).

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