

coarse as those women and men were, it was possible they knew what love was, and if they did, it lifted them far above her. They were kings and queens, all of them. They, with the silent man in the corner of the motor, shared a glorious kingdom, while she stood without the gates—afraid to knock.

She shook herself; she was getting absurd and sentimental.

She looked out of the window, thinking as she did so that Frances would not have been afraid to look! She saw one man step out from a crowd of others round a barrow and hold out his arms to a child, who ran into them.

The man was ugly, coarse, and rough; but within the shelter of his arms a child could find happiness. Violet shuddered; she wished she hadn't looked. She was only feminine enough to love clean children. She could not hold out her arms wide enough to take in those that were ragged, dirty, and uncared for.

The motor went faster as they got into more fashionable quarters, and finally it drew up at the house in Grosvenor Square.

"I can't get out," she said.

"You can—you'll feel nervous for a moment—then it will pass—when you see how much he wants you—needs you. Remember, it's your chance. Think what it is to him to come back like this!"

"If only I loved him!" thought Violet.

Captain Stuart led her up the wide staircase—past the drawing-room. What did she want to see Lady Blatherwake for, when Dick was waiting?

They stopped at the bedroom door. With a gesture he held her back—not that she shewed any eagerness to go in—and he softly opened the door.