

it to William to post. Hastily glancing at it, Julia saw that it had the Paris address, and rightly concluded that it was for M. De Pontes. Lady Eloise returned to the sofa, and, burying her blushing face in the soft cushion, softly murmured "Oh! what will he think of me?"

Time literally flew now for Lady Eloise. She felt the coils now rapidly closing around her. Bitter was her disappointment at receiving not even a message from Paris, and she was obliged to confess, with burning blushes, that her object had miscarried. So, having, as she supposed, lost M. De Pontes' regard, she calmly resigned herself to her fate, so that the Countess was surprised as well as relieved at her daughter's apparent indifference to coming events.

The lawyers were now called in to prepare the settlement. Then it was that Lord Dolphin had another bacchanalian orgie all by himself in his own room. He was told by his professional man that the Earl was very much disappointed and chagrined at the smallness of the sum that he could bring into the settlement.

This would not have disturbed his lordship in the slightest had the information not been accompanied by the intelligence that the Earl was only able to bring in a few thousand pounds himself. "Stumped again: by G—!" he exclaimed. "Just my luck lately! Why, it's only a beggar girl I am marrying, after all. So the old chap was disappointed at the smallness of my fortune, was he? Ha! ha! ha! Well, that is rich. That is why he was so anxious to make me his son-in-law, was it? I really thought it was on account of my own amiability of character. Ha! ha! ha!"

He at one time thought of throwing the whole job up, as he expressed it; but there was the absorbing desire to possess her that he experienced. Besides, as he reflected, parents of late years had shown an indisposition, for

various reasons, to throw their daughters at his head, and he concluded that he might not do even as well.

As the Earl paced the floor of his library that night, far into the morning, pale and dejected, he bitterly reproached himself for not having seen to the settlement before the engagement was made public and invitations to the wedding were issued. He had been so sure, however, of the extent of Lord Dolphin's patrimony. How he could dissipate £250,000 within eight years was beyond the Earl's comprehension. He tried to console himself with the thought that there was something substantial left, and that, perhaps, after marriage he would settle down and take care of it.

It was a September sun that now shone on Payne Hall, as carriage after carriage rolled on their way to the church.

"Don't she look bootiful, Jim," said an urchin who was gazing through the stile as the carriage containing the bride elect passed.

"Yes," responded Jim: "but she is just like the statoot of the woman I saw in Lunnon, whiter n'er snow."

Five days previous to this M. De Pontes returned to his apartments in Paris from the north of France, where he had been sent to quell an anticipated disturbance. His heart thrilled with delight as he observed a letter awaiting him in a well-known female hand-writing. Hastily opening it he observed that it was dated over three weeks previously, and read as follows:

Payne Hall.

My dear Friend,

Do come to me *at once*. I am in great danger and distress. It may affect you too. Do not delay.

ELOISE.

He hastily began preparations for the journey, and having obtained leave, started early the next morning, and, travelling night and day, he was enabled to drive up to the inn near Payne Hall as the gaily caparisoned equipages were rolling to the church.