

"Didn't you?" he answered, with brutal unsympathy for her sympathy with him in his altered circumstances. Then he banged open the door, raised the window and stood by her in an attitude of calm impatience.

She gave another imploring glance. He was eyeing his noble beast's headquarters, his mouth purred up in an audible whistle. "Colonel never could stand in the rain," he said, reflectively, as if taking her into his confidence.

Mrs. Lancaster sighed and stepped into the hansom.

She settled herself in a corner of the cab with another sigh and a furtive glance at the looking-glass to her left, while the driver mounted behind and slowly gathered up the reins. He banged down the window and slapped open the little trapdoor overhead with professional noise, and then, "Where to?" with professional brevity.

"Home, please, if you don't mind," said his fare meekly.

As they drove down Bond street, Mrs. Lancaster's eyes being shut off from outward sights, she turned them inward and viewed her whirling thoughts. What a story this would make if anyone only knew, or if I only had the pen of a ready writer. It's really quite a pity that my gift all runs to seed in correspondence.

"Poor darling, how wet he must be getting up there!"

There was a block just at the corner as they turned into Piccadilly. Mrs. Lancaster profited by the occasion. She took her umbrella and pushed up the skylight.

It was immediately opened.

Mr. Lancaster looked down; Mrs. Lancaster looked up.

"Do you want to get out? I am afraid you cannot. We may have to wait here a quarter of an hour."

"It isn't that," she answered. "I wanted to know, er—I thought, er—I wanted to ask. Oh, Tom, dear, aren't you very wet and cold up there?"

"Thank you, one could scarcely expect there should be a draught up here, or to find it parchingly hot—but I'm quite comfortable, thank you, all the same." With a male's inconsistency.

Down went the skylight. The great stagnation slowly uprose and they drove on again. It had begun to clear up. Mrs. Lancaster thought she knew her way about town, but Mr. Lancaster should have known it still better, and yet he took her round Grosvenor place as a means to reaching Park lane. It seemed as if he took a pleasure in driving by the most opposite and round about route.

She had money of her own, a good £1,500 a year, and when the final split came—a split born of a very small rift—he had been too proud to let her know how his money matters stood, and so it came about that husband and wife had not met for quite a year, and during the last five weeks he had driven a raking bay about London harnessed to a luxurious "S. T." hansom.

And he? Well, he was thinking what a thundering ass he had been and how he had tried her love and faith in him.

And she? Well, had she, too, not flirted just a bit with Lord Raquet and Col. Targent, and when he had remonstrated ever so little had she not flared out on him and thrust that odious, yellow-haired Signora Sorella in his face?

"I wish he wouldn't drive quite so fast," she thought. "We shall get home so soon if he does."

They were passing a restaurant. She slanted her umbrella toward it, and he drew up instantly.

"If you don't mind," she said, "I am just going in for a glass of wine; I feel a little faint."

It was no such thing, for in two minutes she was out again, the wine untouched and the glass in her hand.

"You must have got so wet and cold I wish you—would you?" she stammered, timidly—"would you mind just taking a little—to—to—please me?"

She had taken off her glove, and the broad wedding band caught his eye. A spasm of pain came upon his face. It was like driving your fist through a mirror and smashing the smooth, even surface into bits.

"Thank you," he said, a little unsteadily, in a rather husky voice, as he descended slowly from his perch.

"Oh! I will take it for you."

"I could not think of giving a lady my glass to put down," he answered with his old characteristic courtesy toward the womanhood.

About a quarter of an hour later the hansom drew up in Norfolk street. Mrs. Lancaster got out and walked slowly up the steps. Before ringing she turned around. A little ragamuffin was inspecting her.

"Would you like a sixpence?" she asked him gravely. A superfluous question, to which he replied, with the knowledge of past experience to guide him and a wisdom beyond his winters: "Sixpences were not to be had for nothin'."

"Of course not," she answered, "and you have only to hold the horse's head for a little. You needn't be afraid," she added, rashly guaranteeing the beast's peaceful nature, "and you shall have sixpence."

Thus having reduced the legion of unemployed by one, she turned and rang the bell.

"Do you mind coming in for a few minutes?" she said, addressing her husband, "I want to tell you something."

He looked at her for an instant, then settled his whip in its socket, tied the reins securely and descended slowly.

"But the servants?"

"The only two whom you will see are new ones."

The door opened—"Dinner at once and lay another plate at table."

"You remember this, and this (pausing before some picture or some hanging), and this vase; do you remember how nearly drowned out of that gondola at Venice—it was just opposite those glass works, and you insisted on our going in and buying something to remind you; and how thankful you were that it had ended in nothing worse than a drenching?"

"I have forgotten nothing," he answered gravely.

"Not even the way to your dressing-room?" she said archly, turning around.

"Not even the way to my dressing-room," replied Mr. Lancaster.

"I daresay the gas isn't lighted though." She led the way and they entered the room together.

The room between it and her room was open, and he looked in; he did more; he advanced a few paces and stood in the doorway. He could not have crossed the threshold had it been his most earnest desire.

He devoured every object, a thousand memories crowding to his weary brain, but his face did not change, and his wife watched him closely all the while. She watched as he glanced at the two easy chairs, one at each side of the blazing fire. How often had they occupied them in the happy past! Only then, to be sure, they had been drawn close side by side and they had proved the fallibility of the rule that "two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time." She watched him as his eyes turned to the duchess toilet table, with its large center glass—in front of which he had often made her stand—while he bade her mark what a handsome couple they made. He drew a sharp breath, and a spasm shot across his face, leaving it a shade or two whiter. He glanced up—his wife was looking at him in breathless stillness. She turned quickly and left the room.

He found his way about 10 minutes afterward—Mrs. Lancaster took a little longer.

There was a soft dewiness about her eyes as she came and stood beside him. Husband's and wife's hands met in a