

shrivelled, ringed fingers reprovingly at a stalwart young man.

Once or twice, as she seemed to threaten him with what the poet called "The slow, unmoving finger of scorn," he giggled. It was evident that he was at once amused and troubled. This voice had cherished and chided him all his life, and he could measure accurately what was behind it. It was a wilful voice. It had the insistence which power gives, and to a woman—or to most women—power is either money or beauty, since, in the world as it is, office and authority are denied them. Beauty was gone from the face of the ancient dame, but she still had much money, and, on rare occasions, it gave her a little arrogance. It did so now as she admonished her beloved son, who at any time would have renounced fortune, or hope of fortune, for some wilful idea of his own. A less sordid modern did not exist.

He was not very effective in the contest of tongue between his mother and himself. As the talk went on he foresaw that he was to be beaten; yet he persisted, for he loved a joy-wrangle, as he called it, with his mother. He had argued with her many a time, just to see her in a harmless passion, and note how the youth of her came back, giving high colour to the wrinkled face, and how the eyes shone with a brightness which had been constant in them long ago. They were now quarrelling over that ever-fruitful cause of antagonism—the second woman in the life of a man. Yet, strange to say, the flamingo-like Eugénie Guise, was fighting for the second woman, not against her.

"I'll say it all again and again and again till you have sense, Orlando," she declared. "Your old mother hasn't lived all these years for nothing. I'm not think-