

was only a question how he could mercifully break it; and when; and with what introduction. . . Obviously he could do nothing at present; there could be no crueller choice of time than when she had been inspecting and admiring the house in which they were to live. On the other hand, every day strengthened her in the presumption that he was in love with her—made harder the breach, when it came; and it was tantamount to saying that the better he knew her the more impossible she seemed. He had had his opportunity freely offered a week or two ago: if he ever felt that he had made a mistake, he was to say so. Well, he had thrown away the chance derisively, with vows and protestations. What new reason could he now put before her?

And what could he tell Yolande, Hats, Raymond, the three or four thousand people who had so eagerly congratulated him? There would be the usual announcement that the marriage would not take place; and then—and then! Idina, buried and forgotten as Lady Lancing, would never be so well-known, so notorious—pointed at, whispered about—as the Mrs. Dawson who had jilted Deryk Lancing—or been jilted by him—no one seemed to know the rights of the thing. . . . If he ever did anything, if it were ever worth anyone's while to write a book about him, Idina would go down to posterity as the woman who pre-eminently had *not* married him!

A pleasant prospect when the light of publicity first broke upon her! But that was not the worst; the really pleasant prospect was the meeting when he had to say, "I cannot stand the idea of marrying you." The brutality continued naked, however many clothes you wrapped round it. It would kill her—if people ever were killed by this sort of thing. Or rather, she would catch a chill, and the doctor would say, as that other doctor had said of her father, that she had no stamina, no resistance, made no effort to keep alive. And her murder would lie across his soul. . .

He began to pace slowly backwards and forwards, looking obliquely down on the foreshortened traffic of Pall Mall. Once again he was astonished at the number of soldiers