

cottage ; not at all ; we would rather remain without love in a villa. We do not want a crust with affection, we would much rather have a salmi of partridge or a mayonnaise without. We have been educated to attract, and we live to attract ; we would wish him whom we are fated to attract to be young, good-tempered, sympathetic, artistic, and handsome, as well as rich. Of course he must be rich to begin with. The main thing is the indispensable thing. None of us dream of poverty, even as a possible chance in life, and when we speak of marriage, we mean an establishment *comme il faut*.

Happy Rose ! All these things came to her, just as they might come to a girl in a novel. Julian was handsome—who could doubt that ? He was rich, as men go ; seventy thousand pounds means, because he had often told Rose, three thousand pounds a year. Now, at Campden Hill, where everything spoke of boundless resources, three thousand a year did not seem much, but Rose knew from the way in which her schoolfellows looked at things that three thousand pounds means a really good income, as incomes go ; one which allows of considerable spending and consequent enjoyment. Then Julian was young, just twenty-five, an excellent age for a lover. "Had he ever been in love before ?" thought Rose. There is always that delicate question to be asked or suggested in the early days of courtship ; and always deceitful man, who is like the serpent in getting round an Eve, has to make unveracious statements and explanations that he might have fancied himself in love once or twice already, but that he never knew before what true love meant. We know what they are worth, those statements. The question, in order to elicit the exact truth, ought to be put by the young lady in the form of a public advertisement.

Thus :

"Whereas Julian Carteret, gentleman, of the Union Club, aged twenty-five, has offered his hand to Rose Escomb, of Campden Hill, the said Rose Escomb, who wishes to accept him, hereby calls upon all persons of her own sex, in any rank, to whom the said Julian has at any time, or at any place, made directly or indirectly overtures or confessions, pretence or prelude, of love, or with whom he has transgressed the legitimate bounds of flirtation, to communicate to her, in the

strictest confidence, all the details and full particulars of the *amour* or *amourette*."

There : and pretty kettles of fish there would be to fry, if this method of public advertisement were only to come into fashion.

Rose resolved on asking Julian the delicate question that very afternoon, but did not, because she found no opportunity.

At five o'clock he came again, but Mrs. Sampson was there and other people called. At half-past six she went for a drive with Mrs. Sampson. They dined as a rule, at eight. Perhaps after dinner there would be an opportunity.

The Park was full of carriages and people. "How pale the girls looked," thought Rose. Was that because they had no Julians to make love to them ? And how wearisome their lives must be without some such strong arm as Julian's to lean upon. Pity is a luxury, because it implies for the most part a little superiority. We pity the poor creatures who have fallen from paths of rectitude, and at the same time we feel a little glow of satisfaction in thinking that we could not possibly so fall. Rose's pity for the listless and bored faces in the carriages, was, perhaps, not unmixed with that self-approbation. If their pulses were languid, her's was beating full and strong ; if their blood ran lazily along their veins, her's ran in a warm, swift current ; if their cheeks were pale and their looks languid, her own cheeks were bright and her face full of life and happiness."

"Home, dear ?" asked Mrs. Sampson. "We dine at half-past seven to suit Mr. Gower, Sir Jacob's secretary, who is coming. Quite a dinner-party, indeed. Mr. Gower brings his son, Mr. John Gower."

"Oh, I know him," said Rose ; "I am glad he is coming, my old friend John Gower. He used to be pleasant to talk to, with his rough brusque ways. I wonder if he is pleasant still. It is seven years since I saw him last ; he has been all the time in my uncle's works. I wonder what he is like to look at."

"And Mr. Bodkin is coming too," said Mrs. Sampson, with a little demure dropping down of her eyelids. "My friend, Mr. Bodkin, who was here this morning on business connected with the new Society."

"I am glad he is coming," said Rose, vaguely ; "Julian Carteret is coming too."