

She scribbled on a pad the titles of half a dozen books designed for weary and disconsolate souls, but they hardly touched his case and besides he had probably been deluged with just such literature. Moreover, she must write a note that would not require an answer; this she felt to be imperatively demanded by the circumstances. She thought Archibald Bennett a nice fellow and she was sorry for him, but no more and no less sorry than she would have been for any one else who failed to find the world a pleasant place to live in. Something a little cryptic, yet something that would discourage further confidences without wounding him — this would solve the problem — and she spent an hour turning over the pages of a book of quotations searching for some stirring epigrammatic utterance. The wise of all the ages seemed to have been strangely unmindful of the needs of neurasthenic young men, but finally she hit upon these lines and copied them in her best hand: —

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not put it to the touch
To gain or lose it all.

She wondered who the Marquis of Montrose was who had lived in the seventeenth century and bequeathed this quatrain to posterity, but this didn't matter, and after reading the lines aloud several times she decided that they would serve her purpose admirably. If Mr. Bennett took them seriously, well enough; and if he didn't like them it made no difference as she would probably never meet him again.