

The quartett was abandoned. Arabella had departed with a firm countenance to combat Mrs. Chump.

Emilia sat by her harp. The saloon was critically still; so still that Adela fancied she heard a faint Irish protest from the parlour. Wilfrid was perhaps the most critical auditor present: for he doubted whether she could renew that singular charm of her singing in the pale lighted woods. The first smooth contralto notes took him captive. He scarcely believed that this could be the raw girl whom his sisters delicately pitied.

A murmur of plaudits, the low thunder of gathering acclamation, went round. Lady Gosstre looked a satisfied "This will do." Wilfrid saw Emilia's eyes appeal hopefully to Mr. Pericles. The connoisseur shrugged. A pain lodged visibly on her black eyebrows. She gripped her harp, and her eyelids appeared to quiver as she took the notes. Again, and still singing, she turned her head to him. The eyes of Mr. Pericles were white, as if upraised to intercede for her with the Powers of Harmony. Her voice grew unnerved. On a sudden she excited herself to pitch and give volume to that note which had been the enchantment of the night in the woods. It quavered. One might have thought her caught by the throat.

Emilia gazed at no one now. She rose, without a word or an apology, keeping her eyes down.

"Fiasco!" cruelly cried Mr. Pericles.

That was better to her than the silly kindness of the people who deemed it well to encourage her with applause. Emilia could not bear the clapping of hands, and fled.

CHAPTER V

EMILIA PLAYS ON THE CORNET

THE night was warm under a slowly-floating moon. Full of compassion for the poor girl, who had moved him if she had failed in winning the assembly, Wilfrid stepped into the garden, where he expected to find her, and to be the first to