

with patronage, and hers one of rather unusual patience. "I am sorry, Ratty," she said, at parting, "but as I couldn't ever marry you under any consideration whatever, I really think you'd better stop thinking of it."

"Just like a girl. You always were an idiot, Pam," returned the swain, sending a shower of gravel over the lawn with a savage kick, "as if I *could* stop thinking of it."

The girl laughed. "Then try to remember how you always despised me, that ought to be a comfort. Think what an idiot I am and always was; how thin I am; how much I look like Cally; you surely, in your sane moments, don't want a wife who looks like *that*, do you?"

Caliban, who came hirpling along over the grass towards her, after a short voyage of discovery in the shrubbery, muttering with many grimaces, in the usual disillusion of explorers, was certainly not attractive, and Ratty, burying his hands in his trousers pockets, burst into reluctant laughter.

"You are a wonder, Pam! I declare, I don't believe there's another like you on the face of the earth. There are a dozen girls even in this dead-and-alive neighbourhood who are a thousand times prettier than you, and who can play, or paint, and all that, while you can't do a thing, and yet, a fellow can't get you out of his head!"

Pam looked up suddenly from her occupation of stroking Caliban, her eyes alight with interest. "Really, Ratty? Do you honestly think that—that 'a fellow can't get me out of his head?' I mean, that I should be hard to forget altogether?"

Ratty shrugged his shoulders, a trick he had learned from the girl herself. "If you are thinking of Lassels," he returned with sullen malice, "I don't think that his attentions at the ball meant much. I'm a fool about you, sometimes, but Lassels is going to be the Marquis of Budcombe, my good girl, you must remember."

She raised her eye-brows, looking at him with a gentle scorn that made him uncomfortable. "Try not to be a cad, Ratty," she said quietly, holding out her hand. "The dog-cart is there, and Aunt Rosamund looking for you. Good-bye."