

which your eyes are so dazzled; I was looking for something of much greater interest. I drew out the first slide, and laid it on the hearth; underneath I found a letter addressed, 'To my dear daughter, Eleanor Charters,' and a small paper packet.

"In my mother's letter, the unfortunate story of her married life was told, not much more fully than Fenton had narrated it. But the immediate cause of their separation she detailed minutely, continually trying to shield her husband and throw all blame on herself. It appeared that he had bet heavily at the Derby and lost. He expected his wife to pay his debts of honour, and she refused. He left her in a passion. Then she repented, and began to devise means for paying all. Wishing to do it secretly, and not caring to enlighten her own lawyers on her domestic affairs, she called a lawyer who was poor, who had once been a lover of hers, and whom she knew she could trust implicitly. You and I see plainly the mistake, and she herself saw it when it was too late. My father's extravagance had already considerably affected her fortune; she lived up to her income; she had no ready money to pay off these enormous debts; she dreaded the scandal and talk that might ensue from attempting to raise money openly; she determined secretly to raise the money on her jewels. The lawyer was to discover, if possible, the people to whom the money was owing, to pay it himself, obtain receipts, and have duplicates sent to my father, without my mother's name appearing in the transaction. Here again she erred gravely, as we see; but she was proud and passionate. She had told her husband she would not help him, and now she was breaking her word, and concealing from him what he, as her husband, had a right to know. After the quarrel, the husband and wife had not met; he had, as he frequently did, left London for a season. The lawyer worked indefatigably. By dint of scouring among half the betting people in the country, he found where the money was owing, and arranged the payments on condition that no effort should be made to discover the source of payment. Of course, he had necessarily been with her several times, and their last interview, happening in the evening, was prolonged into the night. He told her that in a day or two at farthest, one set of receipts would be in her hands, another in my father's, who, as she had directed, would be led to suppose that a wealthy cousin was his benefactor. Against this persistent secrecy her legal adviser cautioned her, and strongly