

He wrote his name on the card she handed to him, and sat gazing at her as he began to talk about the people in the room. He was thinking how lovely, how beautiful she was. His black eyes seemed to relax their severity and to grow calmer and softer. Presently he glanced towards the dancers, and a smile lingered lightly on his handsome face as he caught the gaze of Mr. Vaughn, who swung past them with his fair partner.

"What a fine dancer she is!" he exclaimed, turning to her.

"You mean Mdlle. Solferino?" she asked innocently.

"Yes," he said, "she seems as excellent at dancing as at opera."

Lily glanced towards her, and noted the singular beauty of La Solferino's erect but graceful figure. A strange notion seized her that for a moment made her smile. She thought that perhaps Vernon might fall in love with her. It was only a mere fancy, but she hoped that it might be so. She did not care for Vernon, and she saw how, day by day, he seemed to be growing fonder of her. "She's a lovely woman, Mr. Vernon," she said, with flashing eyes turning to him.

"Do you think so?" he said briefly. "Well," he added, "if I had not seen you I might have thought so, too."

Her uplifted eyes dropped and a hot flush stole