

"I should say mixed." Then louder: "As for instance . . ."

"As for instance Cleopatra," answered Mills quietly. He added after a pause: "Who was not exactly pretty."

"I should have thought rather a La Vallière," Blunt dropped with an indifference of which one did not know what to make. He may have begun to be bored with the subject. But it may have been put on, for the whole personality was not clearly definable. I, however, was not indifferent. A woman is always an interesting subject and I was thoroughly awake to that interest. Mills pondered for a while with a sort of dispassionate benevolence, at last:

"Yes, Doña Rita as far as I know her is so varied in her simplicity that even that is possible," he said. "Yes. A romantic resigned La Vallière . . . who had a big mouth."

I felt moved to make myself heard.

"Did you know La Vallière, too?" I asked impertinently.

Mills only smiled at me. "No. I am not quite so old as that," he said. "But it's not very difficult to know facts of that kind about a historical personage. There were some ribald verses made at the time, and Louis XIV was congratulated on the possession—I really don't remember how it goes—on the possession of:

". . . de ce bec amoureux
Qui d'une oreille à l'autre va,
Tra là là.

or something of the sort. It needn't be from ear to ear, but it's a fact that a big mouth is often a sign of a certain generosity of mind and feeling. Young man, beware of women with small mouths. Beware of the others, too, of course; but a small mouth is a fatal sign. Well, the