

permitted in Christendom; he is my god and shall be then as now my idol."

And with a little laugh and a sigh she turned her face quickly, brushing his beard (he was so near), and had laid his hand on hers as she sighed.

"My queen," he whispered eagerly, "of whom have you been thinking all this time? Say of me, and not of him."

"You men all go in for monopoly, George dear, but who is the obnoxious 'he' this time?"

"Trevalyon, of course; did I not hear you ——"

"Stop! or we shall quarrel; if you must know, my thoughts were of you; and I thought you were not such a bad fellow after all as Trevalyon; it would be a terrible thing, George dear, did he inveigle Miss Vernon, for whom he seems inclined, into a marriage with him."

"What the deuce need you care? She is nothing to you. Ah! I begin to see," he continued thoughtfully; "you would not regret had he a taste of the Tantalus punishment."

"I have some conscience left," she said merrily, "which is paying you an indirect compliment, and if you wish to please me you will revive this old scandal, so as to prevent this naughty fellow posing as bigamist; and now promise me and tell me good-night."

"And you forgive me everything and restore me to favour, my queen, while I swear he shall never marry Miss Vernon nor any other woman he covets."

"Yes, you may come to me for your reward, if you effectually prevent Miss Vernon posing as his wife. I shall be sweeter than honey in the honey-comb to you then. But till then, pleasant dreams."

"Before I leave, you must tell me when I may see you alone, for this banishment is killing me."

"Killing you! indeed; all gammon; never saw a man look as though he enjoyed his beef and beer better; no,