

Desunt Cætera

on earth is the matter, Diana? Has anything happened?"

"Nothing—unusual—I suppose."

"You are not ill, are you?"

The tears were slowly blinding her, and she turned her head, standing so, fighting for self-mastery.

"Diana——"

She motioned him to silence. He stood it as long as he could, then stepped over beside her and touched her arm.

"Tell me, dear?" he said under his breath.

She strove to speak—could not, yet; motioned him aside, but he would have none of such commands.

"You took my troubles on your slender shoulders," he said; "may I not help you to carry one or two of yours?" . . . And, as she made no answer: "Dear, if you have not loved me, you have done for me, perhaps, even more than love might have done."

She had dried her eyes; now she turned to him quietly.

"It *was* love. . . . But don't mistake it, Jim. . . . It was a love that asked for nothing that it had not—desired nothing that you had not already given. . . . I thought it best