

a large loop fell to her neck she allowed her arms to drop. She sank upon a chair and, still with unflawed stateliness, presented the back of her head to Mrs. Talcott's skilful manipulations. Mrs. Talcott, in silence, wreathed and coiled and pinned and the beautiful head resumed its usual outlines.

When this was accomplished Madame von Marwitz rose. "Thank you," she uttered. She moved towards the door of her room.

"What are you going to do now, Mercedes?" Mrs. Talcott inquired. Her eyes, which deepened and darkened, as if all her years of silent watchfulness opened long vistas in them, were fixed upon Mercedes.

"I am going to pack and return to my home," Madame von Marwitz replied.

"Well," said Mrs. Talcott, "you'll want me to pack for you, I expect."

Madame von Marwitz had opened her door and her hand was on the door-knob. She paused so and again, for a long moment, she made no reply. "Thank you," she then repeated. But she turned and looked at Mrs. Talcott. "You have been a traitor to me," she said after she had contemplated her for some moments, "you, in whom I completely trusted. You have ruined me in the eyes of those I love."

"Yes, I've gone back on you, Mercedes, that's a fact," said Mrs. Talcott.

"You have handed Karen over to bondage," Madame von Marwitz went on. "She and this man are utterly unsuited. I would have freed her and given her to a more worthy mate." Her voice had the dignity of a disinterested and deep regret.

Mrs. Talcott made no reply. The long vistas of her eyes dwelt on Mercedes. After another moment of this mutual contemplation Madame von Marwitz closed the door, though she still kept her hand on the door-knob.

"May I ask what you have been saying of me to Mrs. Forrester, to Mr. Jardine?"

"Well, as to Mr. Jardine, Mercedes," said Mrs. Talcott, "there was no need of saying anything, was there, if I turned