

Lugano into your head, but that doesn't explain why you and Michael and I should all go to that *al fresco* dinner at the Santafedes'."

"Everybody," said Camilla, "who goes to Lugano, dines at the Santafedes'."

"I'd like the Santafedes to hear you say so."

The English wife of the well-known Neapolitan would not have been pleased, little as the lady studied conventions. She made her own. The land of her adoption had become a cult with her. You might abuse England, if you were so foolish as to wish to. But you were not to criticize Italy. Nothing there but was perfect and, at need, under the Contessa's personal protection, from the beggars in the streets (such dears!) to the Botticellis on the walls, and the fireflies in the evening dusk.

Mrs. Leroy Trenholme had won the Contessa's heart by restoring to a certain little church, in a village on the Santafede estates an altar-piece which had been stolen ten years before and sold in America. Besides being a fine example of early Siennese art, it owned some special quality of simplicity and tenderness which greatly endeared it to Camilla.

The winter before the Swiss journey, chance found Mrs. Trenholme at the ravished shrine. When she heard the picture described she was seized by a guilty conviction that the missing altar-piece was at that moment in her London house.

She said nothing about this till she had returned to London, called a council of experts, and made sadly sure.

Naturally, the woman who had restored the lost altar-piece was a welcome guest of the Santafedes as soon as they learned of her presence in their summer haunt.

Aliee St. Amant, to her momentary discomfiture, found the American there one evening. A slender figure in filmy black, standing out with great distinctness against the white and gold of the Santafedes' *salon de réception*.