

THE EYES OF ALICIA

CHAPTER I

IN THE TUMULT OF THE STORM

"ALICIA!"

The voice was shrill and grating, its tone insistent, imperious. The owner of the voice was an elderly man, his face unprepossessing enough under ordinary circumstances, and especially so now, if only by contrast with the fresh beauty of the handsome girl, who was his companion in the motor brougham making its way through the traffic on Waterloo Bridge towards the South-Western Railway Terminus.

"Yes, Mr. Haggard."

"I want you to reconsider your decision. You *must*. Just think what it means."

"I *have* thought," answered the girl, with a gesture of impatience. "What's the use of going over the tiresome business again? I've made it plain to you, I hope, that under no circumstances can I be your wife."

"What's your objection?"

Alicia Montrose kept her eyes fixed steadily in front of her. The finely-drawn lips were pressed firmly together, as if in resolve not to discuss the unpleasant subject.

"Have you anything to urge against me? Have I failed in the slightest degree to carry out the trust imposed upon me by your father? I've never sought to influence you in any way. I've left you