

## CHAPTER XXV

Richard Vont was buried in the little churchyard behind Mandeleys, the churchyard in which was the family vault and which was consecrated entirely to tenants and dependents of the estate. The little congregation of soberly-clad villagers received more than one surprise during the course of the short and simple service. The Marquis himself, clad in sombre and unfamiliar garments, stood in his pew and followed the little procession to the graveside. The new tenant of Broomleys was there, and Marcia, deeply veiled but easily recognisable by that brief moment of emotion which followed the final ceremony. At its conclusion, the steward, following an immemorial custom, invited the little crowd to accompany him to Mandeleys, where refreshments were provided in the back hall. The Marquis had stepped back into the church. David and Marcia were alone. He came round to her side.

"You don't remember me?" he asked.

"Remember you?" she repeated. "Aren't you Mr. David Thain?"

"Yes," he admitted, "but many years ago I was called Richard David Vont — when I lived down there with you, Marcia."

Emotion had become so dulled that even her wonder found scanty expression.

"I remember your eyes," she said. "They puzzled me more than once. Did he know?"

"Of course," David answered. "We lived together in America for many years, and we came home together."