

round cigarettes and cigars—and still Jeanne sat quietly on ; until the tact of her watchful cousin was again exerted on her behalf.

“Perhaps, Cousin Jeanne, you will give us leave to smoke down here, when you and Mrs. Hogg-Watson withdraw the light of your presence,” he said, smiling at her across the table.

“Oh, yes, certainly,” she cried in confusion ; and Cecilia, rising very thankfully, put her arm through her friend’s, and led her playfully out of the room ; the Duke politely opening the door, and closing it behind them.

“My dear ! Didn’t you see me ? I couldn’t catch your eye. You should have bowed to me long ago. But however, it doesn’t matter”—cutting short Jeanne’s distressed apologies for her unwitting omission. “I was dying to get away and talk to you. I am simply *pinning* to know what you think of Joseph. He was quite *épris* with you. But that is his way. You mustn’t think anything of it. He is always taken with every fresh face he meets ; and then people think him charming ! I only wish they knew what he was like at home. I assure you he was like a bear in the brougham. But I suppose men are always like that with the women they really care for,” said Cecilia, with a sharp glance at Jeanne’s innocent face.

“He seemed very kind,” was all poor Jeanne could reply ; for Cecilia’s tones made her uncomfortable, though she could not tell why.

“As for your poor little lame Duke,” said Mrs. Hogg-Watson, condescendingly. “He is a nice little thing. I quite liked him, though he was rather heavy in hand. I remember all about his family now. One way and another I get to hear most people’s history. I believe he was mixed up in some Gaiety scandal ; but I may be confusing him with somebody else. Anyway, I know he doesn’t get on with his mother. I believe she quite hates the sight of him, on account of his club foot.”