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together on the thronged and noisy platform, unconscious of bustle, noise and throng, mother and son reading love in each other's eyes, alone in the world.

Then Hugh was aware of two ladies who stood a little apart smiling pleasantly. Mrs. Darley he recognized at a glance. She was scarcely changed at all. A little older she seemed, a little sadder, but sweet and gentle as of old. But Sybil! Could this stately beauty in the glorious dawn of young womanhood be his wild harum scarum partner of his rambles over the mountains of Connemara? The fatigue of the long journey had not touched her fresh young beauty, had not dimmed the lustre of her eyes, or faded the damask roses in her cheeks. If a stray ringlet of her golden hair had broken loose across her forehead it but added to her loveliness.

Her voice, too, he thought, sounded more musical than in the old days. "When you two young people," she said, "are done lovemaking, perhaps Hugh would look after our luggage."

At that he awoke from the amazement into which her beauty had plunged him, and welcomed mother and daughter.

Sybil greeted him with a sisterly affection, as if they had parted the day before yesterday, and gave him her cheek to kiss. It used to be her lips in the old days. The touch sent his heart throbbing, though a curious disappointment mingled with his rapture. The girl was too sedate, too self-composed. He would have her shy and agitated as he was, by the meeting, conscious that whatever the future might bring the old relationship, in which sex was ignored in friendly comradeship, had vanished forever.

How could he—a mere male—know that the frank, easy mannered girl had planned the manner of their meeting for weeks before with a beating heart; that ner frank and easy self-possession was consummate acting, of which women only have the secret, to hide an agitation greater than his own.

They all went home together to Hugh's spacious home on the skirts of Hampstead Heath, until the pretty cottage, not half a mile away, which he had secured for Sybil and ner mother, was ready to receive them. For all four it was one of those evenings of pure delight that come seldom in any life, and in some lives come never. Delight blended of joy, of loving reunion, of pleasant remembrance, of delightful anticipation.

In the spacious sitting-room, where a bright fire blazed in the wide grate, and the electric lamps, shaded to faint pink, shed a mellow light on the artistic treasures, they talked from full hearts far into the night. Sybil sat self-possessed, demure and very beautiful at the foot of the small supper table, Hugh opposite, and the old ladies on either side. She seemed to have slipped back quietly into the frank comradeship of the old days, and chatted gaily of their doings in Connemara, and their prospects in London, while Hugh looked and listened, amazed at the radiance of her young beauty.

There was the old bond still between them of artistic sympathy. Hugh's pictures had a new value in their owner's eyes from her keen appreciation of their beauty.

"I will show you my portfolios in the morning, Hugh," she said, "if you would care to see them. Oh! of course, I knew you would say that. But I still hate flattery—good-night"—and again she touched his cheek with her lips in a calm sisterly salute that seemed to turn his blood to flame.

That night he tossed on a sleepless bed in a fever of love, with its alternate fits of passionate hope and chill despair.

As for Sybil—but it is not fair to discuss the secret emotions, if any—of a lady. This alone is certain that she was placid as ever when she met him with undimmed beauty next morning at early breakfast.

While the two mothers were busy planning out a shopping campaign, Hugh and Sybil pored together over her portfolios, he frankly surprised and delighted. In the years of absence

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