

boudoir, where, by her own desire, she is to be left until summoned for these songs. Miss Pettingill has had but one flurried moment with her.

'It will be even worse than I thought,' she exclaims, in a panic of nervous apprehension, 'there is an Englishman coming, somebody very great, a nobleman, I believe, and I wish he was safely back in his own country. He if coming with the Colbaris—he is their guests while in New York. It was bad enough before, goodness knows; it will be dreadful—dreadful to have to sing before him.

Dolores laughs.

'I do not see why. Let us hope the nobleman is no musical critic. What is his name?'

'There is ma calling,' cries the excitable Miss Pettingill. 'I wish—I wish ma wouldn't insit upon my singing, but she does and I know—I feel I shall break down and disgrace myself forever.

She flies away and Dolores settles down for a quiet hour or two over a new book. The swelling music floats up to her, sounds of laughter and gay voices reach her now and then, but the story she reads absorbs her presently, and when at last the message comes that it is time to go down, she starts up, surprised to find it so late.

'And you need not go through the crowded room,' says Miss Pettingill's maid who comes from her, 'although with an honest admiring glance at the crisp new dress and ornaments, and golden curled hair and flower face there is not a lady down there that looks prettier than you, Mrs. Trillon. I can take you right to the piano without passing among the people at all.'

'Yes,' Mrs. Trillon says, 'that will be best.'

They go, and manage to make their way almost unnoticed to where the big Steinway stands. Tall shrubs, and a very bower of ferns and lofty plants, almost completely screen the instrument and the performer. Blanche comes up in a flutter of apprehension and nervousness.

From where she sits Dolores can see far down the dazzling vista of light, and flowers, and thronged rooms, herself invisible.

'Courage!' she whispers, brightly; 'imagine we are alone, and it is our daily music lesson.'

She strikes the first chord of the symphony, and Miss Blanche bursts into song.

A little group follows the heiress and listens to her song. Dolores glances through her vervant bower as she plays, thinking of other nights and scenes like this in far-off lands, when she was queen of the revels. Of

that other ball that seems so far off now, at Lady Rathrippe's, where Colonel Deering was her devoted slave, and she came upon that never-to-be-forgotten scene between her husband and Camilla Routh. A chill, creeping makes her shiver in the perfumed warmth as she recalls it; some of the shame, the pain, the anger, the hunted feeling of that night returns to her.

And yet it is as a dream now—a bad dream, that is over and gone. That life is at an end forever. There is no longer a Dolores, Lady Valentine—only a Mrs. Trillon, who teaches for a salary, and walks the New York streets in shabby dresses, and lives in a poky five-roomed flat, and plays Miss Blanche Pettingill's accompaniments for so much per night. That life has come and gone like a dream, and she is quite content—or tries hard to think she is—to let life go on indifferently like this.

The song ends, and with no disastrous breakdown. There is a soft murmur of thanks and pleasure, and Blanche breathes again. But the respite is only for a moment.

'Here is—'

Dolores does not catch the name, lost in the last vibrating chords she strikes, but a flutter goes all at once through the little circle behind her.

'Oh!' cries Blanche, with a gasp of very real horror, 'it is the Englishman and ma! Now I know she will make me sing again!'

Dolores half laughs at the anguish of the tone, the tragic terror of the look, and peeps with considerable curiosity through her leafy screen. She sees coming down the long, brilliant room Mrs. Pettingill in her diamonds and moire antique, on the arm of a tall, dark gentleman, who does not look in the least like an Englishman. And as she looks the room spins round, the gas-lights flash out and blind her, a mist comes before her eyes, her heart absolutely stops beating.

For the man on whose arm Mrs. Pettingill leans, the English 'nobleman' coming straight to where she sits, is—Sir Vane Valentine!

CHAPTER XI.

'FOR TIME AT LAST MAKES ALL THINGS EVEN.'

She sits for one dizzy moment, stunned, bewildered, motionless. Her husband!—and here!—drawing nearer, his head a little bent, listening to what his hostess is saying, with something of a bored look in his sallow, dissatisfied face.

She holds her breath, and sits gazing, held