

Michael and Téphany were left alone. At once Michael crossed the room.

"Don't speak!" he entreated. "I am going, Téphany. Do you think that I do not understand? If I loved you less, I might be mistaken. You could have forgiven me anything except the detestable meanness of accepting all from that child and giving nothing in return."

"Fetch—the—mask," said Téphany. Her throat was becoming so intensely painful that the utterance of each word gave her severe pain. Michael stared at her, questioningly, but without speaking, obeying a gesture of her hand. Outside he met Mary Machin.

"You are not leaving her?" gasped Machie.

"She asks for the mask."

"Oh! I'll fetch it. Wait here!" She hurried off, leaving Michael at the head of the stairs. When she came back, as she placed the cast in his hands, she said warningly: "You mustn't let her talk."

"She is very hoarse."

"All the good of the past two months has been undone. Sir Japhet thinks that she will never sing again in public, but——"

"Well?"

"She won't mind that, if she can sing in private to the man she loves."

Then Mary Machin hurried downstairs; Michael went back into the room.

Téphany held out her hands to receive the mask. When she grasped it Michael went to the window.

The sun had finally asserted his dominion over the now fast vanishing clouds. Upon the rocks near the landing tiny pools of water reflected the pale blue tints of the sky, deepening every minute into a purer azure. Some of the children of the hamlet, kept prisoners by the storm and frightened out of their wits by the thunder, were standing near the pools. Michael could hear innocent peals of laughter, the louder and