

Afterward he started off on a long, wearisome round of professional visits, and spent the remainder of the day wandering restlessly about town. Not until the streets were gemmed with gas lights did he go home.

"Home!" He repeated the word to himself, and vaguely wondered at its empty, meaningless sound. Henceforth one spot would be as much a home to him as another. He even grew a little bitter and rebellious, and wondered if men were endowed with hearts and the power of loving sacredly, only as a means of torment for them. His soul cried out with Shakespeare: "O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes!"

Again he stood outside and saw Leonie sitting in in her favorite chair, by the hearth; and he knew that she was waiting for him to come and speak to her, and to participate, in a brotherly way, in her regained happiness.

"I'll just go in and have it over, once for all," he muttered, and in a moment he was standing beside her, looking down into her upturned face and saying—

"I want to tell you, Leonie, how glad I am, for—your sake. I shall pray for your peace—your happiness."

He tried, oh, so hard, to make his voice steady and calm; but it trembled, after all, and his eyes wavered and grew dim with a mist of tears, as he looked at her.

She said nothing, but lifted her luminous eyes once more to his face, with a glance that bewildered him, then reached up, and taking his hand in both her own, drew it down and pressed it first to her lips, then to the soft, warm velvet of her cheek, where she held it in a silent caress.

A wild thrill of despairing love swept over him and shook him as the veriest reed is shaken in a storm. One long minute thus; then she arose and stood before him.

"Allan," she said, in her beautiful, low, clear voice, "do you know that I have sent Arthur Desmond forever away from me?"

"What!"

He distrusted his senses, and thought he could not have heard aright.

"It is quite true, Allan, I have sent him back to Australia. I have convinced him that the girl who once loved him with all her soul, is no more, and that the woman who stands in her place has set herself a standard that such as he can never attain. Why do you not speak, Allan? Are you sorry that I am not going to leave you?"

"Sorry! God in heaven, Leonie, can this really be true?"

"It is true, Allan."

"And what does it mean? Oh, Leonie, what does it mean?"

"It means, Allan, that having found a real diamond, I never again can soil my womanhood with paste. No, no," drawing away from him as he put out his arms with a quick, glad movement, "no, Allan, not that; all must be just as it has been. I am not free—I—"

She could not complete the sentence, for his arms were about her, his lips persistently seeking hers.

"Darling," he said, when he let her go, an hour later, "I am brave now; after this hour I can defy all eternity to take you from me. What is time or space to us now, dear? True, you are not free; but I can wait until such time as you feel willing to let the law of our land free you. I will go to Scotland for a time. I have long wished to visit Aberdeen, the birthplace of my parents, and I will remain abroad a year—two years—five years—or until I receive from you the magic message 'I am free.'"

"But Allan, I shall miss you so; why need you leave me?"

"Why need I leave you?" he echoed. "You, yourself, have said it, dear—you are not free."

"I have never been free since you have known me, Allan, yet how happy we have been together."

"Heavens! How like a woman's logic that is."

He took her face in his hands, and smiled into her earnest eyes.

"Little woman," he said, with a thrill in his tender voice, "do you recognize no difference between the then and the now? Do you think I am going to be as good a boy in the golden future as I have been in the gray past? If so, how much you have yet to learn of Allan Kirke. No, dear, it is best that I go away for a time. In proportion as you miss me, you will hasten the time of my home-coming, and—hark! there goes the door bell; a summons for me, probably."

Even as he spoke, a servant entered. "A call for you, sir, and a carriage waiting at the door," said the maid.

He bade Leonie a silent good-night with his eyes and went out.

"I have been sent in great haste for you, Doctor," said the messenger at the door, "a man has shot himself at the —— hotel."

Allan Kirke started, and asked quickly, "Who is the man?" for the name of the hotel mentioned was that at which he had met Arthur Desmond.

The man only answered, "Can't say who, sir," and away dashed the carriage through the night mists.

Something seemed to say to Allan Kirke that it was Arthur Desmond he was going to see, and the premonition proved true. In the same little parlor