the mountain echoes, taking it up, sang the refrain enchantingly over and over again. Edith lifted up her tace to the starry sky, the moonlight bathing it in a glory.

"Oh, what a night!" she sighed. "What a bright, beautiful world it is, and how perfectly happy one could be, if—"

"One had thirty thousand a year?" Char-

ley suggested.

"Yes, exactly. Why can't life be all like this—moonlight, capital dinners, lots of friends and new dresses, a nice boat, and —yes—I will say it—somebody one likes very much for one's companion."

"Somebody one likes very much, Edith? I wonder sometimes if you like me at all if it is in you to like any one but your-

"Thanks! I like myself, certainly, and first best I will admit. After that—"

"After that?" he repeats.
"I like you. No—keep quiet, Charley,
please, you'll upset the boat. Of course I
like you—aren't you my cousin—haven't like you—aren't you my cousin—haven't you been awfully kind—don't I owe all this to you? Charley, I bless that night in the snow—it has been the luckiest in my life."

"O Edith, let us speak for once—let us understand one another, and then part for-ever, if we must. Only why need we part

She turns pale—she averts her face from him, and looks out over the radiant water.

sooner or later she has known this must come—it has come to-night.

"Why need we part at all?" He is lean-ing on his oars, and they are floating lightly with the stream. "I don't need to tell you how I love you; you know it well enough; and I think—I hope—you care for me. Be true to yourself, Edith—you belong to me—come to me; be my wife."

There is reserved in his tone, in his eves.

There is passion in 11's tone, in his eyes, but his voice is quiet, and he sits with the oars in his hands. Even in this supreme moment of his life Mr. Stuart is true to his "principles," and will make no

"You know I love you," he repeats, "as the man in the Cork theatre said the other night: 'I'll go down on my knees if you like, but I can love you just as well standing up.' Edith, speak to me. How can you ever marry anyone but me—but me, whose life you saved. My darling, forget your cynicism — it is but lip-deep — you don't really mean it—and say you will be

"Your wife!" She laughs, but her heart thrills as she says it. "Your wife! It would be pleasant, Charley; but, like most of the pleasant things of life, it can

"Charley, all this is nonsense, and you know it, We are cousins—we are good friends and staunch comrades, and always

will be, I hope; but lovers—no, no no!"

"And why?" he asks.

"Have I not told you already—told you over and over again? If you don't despise me, and think me heartless and base, the fault has not been my want of candor. My cynicisms I mean, every word. If you had your father's wealth, the fortune he means to leave you, I would marry you to-morrow, and be," her lips trembled a little, "the happiest girl on earth."
"You don't care for me at all, then?" he

calmly asks. I am not all selfish. I care for you so much that I would sooner die than marry you.

Foe you a marriage with me means ruin-

"My father is fond of me. I am his only son. He would relent." "He never would," she answered firmly, "and you know it. Charley, the day he spoke to you in Cork, I was behind the window-curtains reading. I heard every word. My first inpulse was to come out and confront him—to throw back his favors and patronage, and demand to be sent home. A horrid bad temper is numbered among the list of my failings. But I did not. I heard your calm reply—the 'soft answer that turneth away wrath,' and it fell like

oil on my troubled spirit. 'Don't lose your temper,' you said : 'Fred Darrell's daughter and I, won't marry, if that's what you mean.'

"I admire your prudence and truth. I took the lesson home, and—stayed behind the curtains. And we will keep to that—you and Fred Darrell's daughter will never

marry."
"But, Edith, you know what I meant." Good Heavens! you don't for a second sup-

"I don't for a second suppose anything but what is good and generous of you, Charley. I know you would face your father like a—like a 'griffin rampant,' to quote Trix, and brave all consequences, if I would let you. But I won't let you. You can't afford to defy your father. I can't afford to marry a poor man."

"I am young—I am strong—I can work.
I have my hands and my head, a tolerable education, and many friends. We would

"We would not starve-perhaps," Edith says, and laughs again, rather drearily. "We would only grub along, wanting everything that makes life endurable, and be miserable beyond all telling before the tirst year ended. We don't want to hate each other-we don't want to marry. You couldn't work, Charley—you were never born for drudgery. And I—I can't forget the training of my life even for you."

"You can't, indeed—you do your training credit," he answered, bitterly.
"And so," she goes on, her face drooping,
"don't be angry; you'll thank me for this some day. Let it be all over and done with to-night, and never be spoken of more. Oh, Charley, my brother, don't you see we could not be happy together—don't you see it is better we should part?"

"It shall be exactly as you wish. I am but a poor special pleader, and your worldly wisdom is so clear, the dullest intellect without a pang, and you mean to marry the baronet. Only—as you are not yet his exclusive property, bought with a price—answer me this: You love me?"

Her head drooped lower, her eyes were full of passionate tears, her heart full of passionate pain. Throw him over without a pang! In her heart of hearts Edith Darrell knew what it cost her to be heartless

"Answer me!" he said imperiously, his eyes kindling. "Answer me! That much, at least, I claim as my right. Do you love me or do you not?"

And the answer comes very humbly and

"Charley! what need to ask? You know by too well—I do." And then silence falls. He takes up the oars again—their soft dip, and the singing of the girl in the distant boat, the only

counds.

"Come what may," Charley says at length, "it is better that I should have spoken and you should have answered. Come what may—though you marry Sir Victor to-morrow—I would not have the past changed if I could."

"And you will not blame me too much—you will not quite despise me?" she pleads,

This is how two of the water-party were enjoying themselves. A quarter of a mile farther off, another interesting little scene was going on in another boat.

Trixy had been rattling on volubly. It was one of Trixy's fixed ideas that to entertain and fascinate anybody her tongue must go like a windmill. Sir Victor sat and listened rather absently, replied rather dreamily, and as if his mind were a hundred miles away. Miss Stuart took no notice, but kept on all the harder, endeavoring to be fascinating. But there is a limit even to the power of a woman's tongue. That limit was reached; there came a lull and a pause.

"The time I've lost in wooing," began the English girl in the third boat. The idea was suggestive; Trixy drew a deep breath,

was suggestive; Trixy drew a deep breath, and made a fresh spurt—this time on the subject of the late Thomas Moore and his melodies. But the young baronet suddenly

"I beg your pardon, Miss Stuart," he began hastily, and in a somewhat nervous voice; but there is a subject very near to my heart on which I should like to speak

my heart on which I should like to speak to you this evening."

Trix sat straight up in the stern of the boat, as if she had been galvanized. Her heart gave one great ecstatic thump. "Oh," thought Miss Stuart, "he's going to pop! He's going to pop, as sure as I live!"

There was a pause—unspeakably painful to Miss Stuart. "Yes, Sir Victor," she faltered in her most dulcet and encouraging

accents.

"I had made up my mind not to speak of it at aft," went on Sir Victor, looking embarrassed and rather at a loss for words, "until we reached England. I don't wish to be premature. I—I dread a refusal so unspeakably, that I almost fear to speak at at all."

thought) "why don't he speak out, and not go beating about the bush in this ridiculous manner! What's he afraid of? Refusal, ndeed! Stuff and nonsense!"

"It is only of late," pursued Sir Victor Catheron, "that I have quite realized my own feelings, and then when I saw the attention paid by another, it was my jealousy first taught me that I loved." "He means Captain Hammond," thought Trixy; "he's jealous of him, as sure as a gun. How lucky we met him at Macroom."

"And yet," again resumed the baronet, with a faint smile, "I don't quite despair. I am sure, Miss Stuart, I have no real

Stuart. "And when I address myself to your father and mother—as I shall very soon—you think, Miss Stuart, they will also favor

"They favor his suit?" thought Trix, good Heaven above! was ever earthly modesty like this young man's?" But aloud, still in the trembling tones befitting the occasion, "I—think so—I know so, Sir Victor. It will be only too much honor, I'm sure.

you will allow me to call you so—you think that when I speak—when I ask—I will be

accepted?"

"He's a fool!" thought Beatrix, with an inward burst. "A bashful, ridiculous fool!
Why, in the name of all that's namby-pamby, doesn't he pop the question like a man, and have done with it? Bashfulness is all asks.

very well—nobody likes a little of it better
than I do; but there is no use running it into

the ground."
"You are silent," pursued Sir Victor.
"Miss Stuart, it is not possible that I am
too late, that there is a previous engage-Miss Stuart straightened herself up, lifted her head, and smiled. She smiled in a way

that would have driven a lover straight out "Call me Beatrix, Sir Victor; I like it best from my friends—from—from you. No, there is no previous engagement, and " (archly, this) "I am quite sure Sir Victor Catheron need never fear a refusal."

"Thanks." And precisely as another young gentleman was doing in the shadow of the "Torc," Sir Victor did in the shadow of the "Eagle's Nest." He lifted his fair companion's hand to his lips, and kissed

After that of course there was silence After that of course there was silence. Trixy's heart was full of joy—pure, unadulterated joy, to bursting. Oh, to be out of this, and able to tell pa and ma, and Charley, and Edith, and everybody! Lady Catheron! "Beatrix—Lady Catheron!" No—Ican't describe Trixy's feelings. There are some joys too intense and too sacred for the Queen's English. She shut her eyes and drifted along in that blessed little boat

in a speechless, ecstatic trance. An hour later, and, as the clocks of Killarney were striking ten, Sir Victor Catheron helped Miss Stuart out of the boat, and had led her up — still silently—to the hotel. At the entrance he paused, and said the only disagreeable thing he had uttered to-night. "One last favor, Beatrix," tak-ing her hand and gazing at her tenderly, "I must ask. Let what has passed between us remain between us for a few days longer. I had rather you did not speak of it even to your parents. My aunt, who has been more than a mother to me, is ignorant still of my feelings—it is her right that I inform her first. Only a few days more, and then all the world may know?

all the world may know."
"Very well, Sir Victor," Beatrix answer-

"Very well, Sir Victor," Beatrix and ed demurely; "as you please, of course, I shan't speak to pa or ma. Good-night, Sir Victor, good night!"

May I tell it, Miss Stuart actually gave the heronat's hand a little squeeze? But were they not engaged lovers, or as good? and isn't it permitted engaged lovers to squeeze each other's right hands? So they parted. Sir Victor strolled away to smoke a cigar in the moonlight, and Miss Stuart, with a beautified face, swept upstairs. Lady tatheron, Lady Catheron! Oh, what would all Fifth Avenue say to this?

Sleep was out of the question-t was open to debate whether she would ever sleep again. She would go and see Edith. Yes, Edith and Charley had got home before her—she would go and see Edith. She opened the door and went in with a swish of silk and patchouli. The candles

"All in the dark, Dithy, and thinking by the 'sweet silver light of the moon?" O Edie! isn't it just the heavenliest night?" "Is that what you came in here to say,

"O yes, Edith—out in the boat to-night. O Edith! I'm so happy—I want to jump—I want to dance—I feel wild with delight! Just think of it—think of it! Trixy Stuart will be My Lady Catheron!"

She tarned of a dead white from brow to chin. She sat speechless with the shock—looking at Trixy—unable to speak or move.

"He's most awfully and aggravatingly modest," pursued Beatrix. "Couldn't say plump, like a man and brother, "Trixy Stuart will you marry me?" but beat about

land.

Edith burst out laughing. But somehow the laugh sounded unnatural, and her lips felt stiff and strange.

"You're as hoarse as a raven and as pale as a ghost," said Trix. "That's what comes of sitting in draughts, and looking at the moonshine. I'm awfully happy, Edith; and when I'm Lady Catheron, you shall come and live with me always—always, you dear old darling, just like a sister."

She flung her arms around Edith's neck, and gave her a rapturous hug. Edith Darrell unclasped her arms and pushed her away.

"I'm tired, Trix; I'm cold." She shiver

"But won't you say something, Dithy?
Won't you wish me joy?"
"I—wish—you joy."
Her lips kept that strange feeling of stiffness—her face had lost every trace of color.
Oh, to be alone and free from Trix!

"You say it as if you didn't mean it, said Trix indignantly, getting up and moving to the door. "You look half-frozen, and as white as a sheet. I should advise you to shut the window and go to bed."

She was gone. Edith drew a long breath—a long, tired, heavy sigh. So! that was over—and it was Trix, after all.

Trive of tar all! How strengely it sound

Trix after all! How strangely it sounded—it stunned her. Trix, after all, and she had made sure it was to be herself. He had looked at her, he had spoken to her, as he had never looked or spoken to Trix. His color had risen like a girl's at her coming—she had felt his heart bound as she leaned on his arm. And it was Trix, after all!

CHAPTER VI.

And after to-night we will all have a rest,

And after to-night we will all have a rest, thank Heaven! and my pilgrimage will come to and end. A fortnight at Powyss Place before you go up to London, my dear Miss Stuart—not a day less."

Thus Lady Helena Powyss, eight days later, seated luxuriously in the first-class carriage, and flying along by express train between Dublin and Kingston, en route for Cheshire.

Captain Hammond was of the party still and included in the invitation to Powyss Place. He sat between Lady Helena and Sir Victor now—Miss Stewart, in charming travelling costume, in the sunny seat near the window. On the opposite seat, at the extreme end, sat Edith Darrell, her eyes rivited upon the pages of a book.

Since that night in the boat Miss Stuart had quietly but resolutely taken entire pos-

session of Sir Victor. morning following that never-to-be-forgot-ten night, Edith had entered and taken Trix in her arms and kissed her.

Trix in her arms and Rissed her.

"I was stupid and out of sorts last night,
Trixy," she had said. "If I seemed churlish, I ask your pardon, dear, with all my
heart. I was surprised—I don't mind owning that—and perhaps a little, just a little,
envious. But all that is over now, and I do wish you joy and happiness from the bottom of my heart." And she meant it. Against the baronet

himself, she felt anger deep and strong still. How dared he seek her out as he done, select her for his confidante, and look love in fifty different ways, when he meant to marry Trix? What a fool she might have made of herself had she been a whit less proud than she was. Since then she had avoided him; in no marked manner, perhaps, but she had avoided him. If he felt this avoidance, he showed no sign. Perhaps he thought Miss Stuart had dropped some hint—girls, despite their promises, have been known to do such things—and this change was becoming maidenly reserve. Trixy's unremitting attentions were sisterly, of course. He felt grateful accordingly, and strove to repay her in kind. One other thing he observed, too, and with great complacency — the friendship between Miss Darrell and her cousin Charley had come to an end. This was as it should be; certain-

ly Beatrix must have dropped that very Two carriages awaited them at the Chester station. Into one entered Mr. and Mrs. Stuart, Sir Victor, and Beatrix; into the other, Lady Helena, Edith, Charley, and Captain Hammond. They drove away through quiet, quaint Chester, "rare old city of Chester." Presently an endless stretch of ivied wall appears in view, inclosing a primeval forest, it seems to Edith;

and Lady Helena sits up and rubs her eyes, and says it is Catheron Royals.

They emerge from the chill darkness of dawning day into a blaze of light—into a vast and stately entrance-hall. A long file of servants are drawn up to receive them.
And "Welcome to Powyss Place," Lady
Helena says with kind courtesy. "I can
only wish your visit may be as pleasant to

you as you made mine in New York."
Without changing their dresses they are ushered into a lofty and handsome diningroom. More brilliant lights, more silent, respectful servants, a round table luxurious respectific servants, a round table luxuriously spread. They sit down; forget they are tired and sleepy; eat, drink, and are merry; and it is five before they were shown up to their rooms. Then, hasty disrobing, hasty lying down, and all are at peace in the land of dreams.

Next day, about noon, Miss Stuart, click ing along in her narrow-soled, high-heeled boots, over a polished oaken corridor, lost her footing, as might be imagined, and came down, with an unearthly screech, on one ankle. Sir Victor was first on the field, and in Sir Victor's arms Miss Stuart was lifted, and borne back to her room.

Luckily it was near, or even Sir Victor's chivalry and muscular development would not have been equal to it, for Trix was a "fine woman." The ankle was bathed and

not have been equal to it, for Trix was a "fine woman." The ankle was bathed and bandaged, the invalid's breakfast brought up—everything done for her comfort that it was possible to do; and in the midst of their fussing, having cried a great deal, Miss Stuart suddenly dropped off to sleep. Edith came out of the room looking pale and tired. In the slippery passage she encountered Sir Victor waiting.

"I have waylaid you on purpose, Miss Darrell," he said, smiling, "lest you should meet with a mishap, too. A carpet shall be placed here immediately. You look pale—are you \$\mathbb{R}\!!?

"I feel well enough; nothing is ever the matter with me; but I am rather stupid. Stupidity," she said, with her old laugh, "is fast becoming my normal state."

"You will come with me for a walk, will you not?" he asked. "The park is very well worth seeing. To-morrow, Miss Stuart's sprain permitting, we shall all visit Catherine Royals. Do come, Miss Darrell; it will de you a world of good."

She hesitated a moment, then went. What difference did it make? Trix wouldn't be jealous now. What difference did anything make, for that matter? So they went on that fateful walk, that walk that was to be like no other in all Edith Darrell's life.

"This is the Lime Walk—the prettiest at

It was all the same to Edith—the Lime Walk, the eminence, or any other part of the park. She took Sir Victor's arm, as he seemed to expect it, and went with him slowly up the elevation.

"It is a wonderfully pretty place." she said. "I should think you English people, whose ancesters, time out of mind, have lived and died here, would grow to love every ivy-chad stone, every brave old tree. If I were not an American girl, I would be an English miss."

an English miss."
She laughed and looked up at him, her spirits rising in the sunshine and the free, fresh air. His eyes were fixed upon her face—passionate admiration, passionate love, written in them far too plainly for any girl on earth not to read. And yet—he had

"You would?" he eagerly exclaimed.
"Miss Darrell, do I understand you to say
you could live in England all your life—give
up America and your friends, and pass your

She shrugged her shoulders.
"It would be no great sacrifice. Apart
from my father there isn't a soul in all wide America I care a farthing for, and your America I care a farthing for, and your English homes are very charming."
The last barrier broke down. He had not meant to speak—he had meant to be very prudent and formal—to tell Lady Helena first, to refer the matter to Mr. Stuart next. Now all prudence and formality were swept away. Her hands were in his—he was speaking with his whole heart in every word.

in every word. "Then stay and share an English home—share mine Edith, I love you—I have loved you, I think, since I saw you first. Will

you be my wife ?"
Alas for Trix!—that was Edith's first thought. To burst out laughing—that was Edith's first impulse. Not in triumph or exultation—just at this moment she felt neither—but at the awful blunder Trix had made; for Trix had made a blunder, that

made; for Trix had made a bidinder, that was clear as day, else Sir Victor Catheron had never said those words.

"I meant to have spoken to Lady Helena and Mr. Stuart first," Sir Victor went on; and Mr. Stuart first," Sir Victor went on;
"but that is all over now. I can't wait
longer; I must take my sentence from your
lips. I love you! What more can I say?
You are the first my lips have ever said it
te—the first my heart has ever felt it for.
Edith, tell me, may I hope?"
She stood silent. They were on the summit of the hill. Away far off she could

she stood silent. They were on the summit of the hill. Away, far off, she could see the waving trees and tall chimneys of a stately mansion — Catheron Royals, no doubt. It looked a very grand and noble place; it might be her home for life—she who, in one sense, was homeless. A baronet stood beside her, offering her rank and realised, and in this hour she felt neither triumph nor elation. She stood and listened, the sunlight on her gravely beautiful face, with vague wonder at herself for her

am too late—that some one has been before me and won your heart. I couldn't bear it! Your cousin assured me that when spoke the answer would be favorable. I spoke to her that night in Killarney—I did not mention your name, but she understood me immediately. I told her I meant to speak as soon as we reached England. I asked her if she thought there was hope for

The passionate eagerness, the passionate love and fear within him checked his words suddenly. He stopped for a moment and turned away.
"O Trixy! Trixy!" was Edith's thought;

and ridiculous and out of place as the emo-tion was, her only desire still was an almost uncontrollable desire to laugh outright. What a horrible—what an unheard-of blunder the child had made!

She stood tracing figures on the grass with the point of her parasol, feeling strangely apathetic still. If her life had depended on it, she could hardly have accepted Sir Victor then. By and by she might feel half wild with exultation—not He waited for the answer that did not

Then he turned from her, pale with quite successfully, to steady his voice; "I am too late. You love your cousin, and are engaged to him. I feared it all along." The brown starry eyes, lifted slowly from the grass and looked at him.

"My cousin? You mistake, Sir Victor: I am engaged to no one. 1"-she set her lips suddenly and looked away at the trees and the turrents of Catheron Royals, shining

"No one, Edith! Not even me?"
"Not even you, Sir Victor. How could
I? Why should I? I never dreamed of "Never dreamed of this!" he repeated, in amaze; "when you must have seen—must have known-

She interrupted him, a faint smile curling "I thought it was Trixy," she said.
"Miss Stuart! Then she has told you nothing of that night at Killarney—I really imagined she had. Miss Stuart has been my kind friend, my one confident and sympathizer. No sister could be kinder in her

encouragement and comfort than she.' "O poor Trix-a sister!" Edith thought, and in spite of every effort, the laugh she strove so hard to suppress dimpled the cor-ners of her mouth. "Won't there be a

say you will be my wife."

Her hands were in his. The fervor, the passion within him almost frightened her. "Sir Victor, I-I hardly know what to say. I wonder that you care for me. I wonder you want to marry me. I am not your equal; I have neither rank, nor wealth, nor descent.

"You have the grace and beauty of a ss—the goodness of an angel; I ask g more. You are the mate of a ; and I love you. Everything is said

prince; and I love you. Everything is said in that."

"Lady Helena will never consent.".

"Lady Helena will consent to anything that will make me happy. The whole happiness or misery of my life lies in your hands. Don't say no, Edith—don't for Heaven's sake. I could not bear it—I cannot lose you; I will not?" he cried almost fiercely.

She smiled faintly again, and that lovely rose-pink blush of hers deepened in her cheeks. It was very nice indeed to be wooed in this fiery fashion.

"Fortes fortuna juvas," she said, laughing. "I learned enough Latin, you see, to know that fortune assists the brave. People who wen't take 'no' for an answer must have 'yes' of course."

"And it is 'yes!' Edith—"

"Be quiet, Sir Victor, it is net 'yes' just yet, neither is ft 'no.' You must let me think this over, my head is giddy with your vehemence. Give me—let me see—until to-merrow. I can't answer now."

ought—certainly not as you love me. If you take me you shall take me at my true value. I am not an angel—ah, no; the farthest in the world from it—the most selfish of the selfish. I like you very much; it is not hard to do that. To be your wife would be my highest honor, but still I must have time. Come to me to-morrow, Sir Victor, any time, and you shall have your answer. Don't say one word more until then. Now let us go back.

He howed and offered his arm. She took

He bowed and offered his arm. She took it, and in profound silence they walked back. The one topic that filled him, heart and soul, strength and mind, was forbidden—it was simply impossible for him to speak of any other. For Edith she walked calmly beside him—her mind a serene blank. ly beside him—her mind a serene blank.

They reached Powyss Place—they entered the drawingroom. All eyes turned upon the newcomers, Trix's with suspicious jealousy. If Sir Victor were in love with herself, was not his fitting place by her side in this trying hour, instead of meandering about with Dithy? And what business had Dithy monopolizing another girl's lov-

er?

"I think I shall ride over to Drexel
Court between this and dinner," Sir Victor
said. "I promised Hampton—"
Lady Helena laughed and interrupted:

"And Lady Gwendoline is there—I understand. Go by all means, Victor, and give
Gwendoline my love. We shall expect you
back to dinner."

The young man colored like a girl. He glanced uneasily at Edith, but Miss Darrell had taken up a photograph book of literary celebrities, and was immersed therein. Captain Hammond and Charley betook hemselves to the billiard room. Trixy

turned her suspicious eyes upon her cousin. "Where were you and Sir Victor all day,

Edith?"

"I and Sir Victor have not been any where all day, Beatrix. During the last hour we have been walking in the grounds."

"What were you talking about?"

"Many things," Miss Darrell responded, promptly. "The beauty of the prospect—the comfort of English homes, and the weather, of course. If I understood shorthand, and had been aware of your anxiety on the subject, I might have taken notes of our conversation for your benefit." our conversation for your, benefit."
"Did you talk of me?"

"I believe your name was mentioned." "Dith!" in a whisper, and raising herself on her elbow, "did Sir Victor say anything about—about—you know what?" "He did not say one word about being in

love with you or marrying you, if that is what you mean. Now please stop catechising, and let me look at the pictures." Twilight fell—dinner hour came: with it Sir Victor. He looked pale, anxious, tired. He answered all his aunt's inquiries about the Drexel family in the briefest possible manner. His over-fond aunt looked at him a little uneasily—he was so unlike himself, and presently drew him aside, after dinner,

"Victor, what is the matter? Are you "Ill? No. My dear aunt," smiling "don't wear that alarmed face—there is nothing the matter with me."

"There is something the matter wit You are pale, you are silent, you eat "I will tell you to-morrow," he answered. "Spare me until then. I am anxious, I admit, but not even to you can I tell why to-night. You shall know all about

For Edith-she was in that mood of serene recklessness still. Of to-morrow she neither cared to think, nor tried to think. The tide of her life was at its flood; whither the stream might bear her after this night, just now, she neither knew nor cared. For the present she was free, to-morrow she might be a bondwoman. Her fetters would be of gold and roses; none the less though would they be fetters.

Upon going to her room that night Edith Darrell did not go to bed. She put the lights away on the toilet-table in the dressing room, wrapped something around her and sat down by the window to think it

Should she marry Sir Victor Catheron, or should she not? She cared nothing for him—nothing whatever—very likely she never would. She loved Charlie Stuart with all the power of her heart, and just at present it seemed to her she always must. That was how the problem stood.

If she married Sir Victor, rank and wealth

beyond all her dreams would be hers, a life

of luxury, all the joys and delights great wealth can bring. She liked pleasure, luxury, beauty, rank. For love—well, Sir Victor loved her, and for a woman it is always better, safer, to be loved than to That was one phase of the case. Here was the other: She might go to Charley and say. "Look here—I care for you so much, that life without you, isn't worth the

living. I will marry you, Charley, when-ever you like." He would make her his wife. Alone in darkness, her heart thrilled as she thought of it—and the intenest joy of life would be hers for a while. For while. They would be poor—his father would cast him off—he must, for the first ners of her mouth. "Won't there be a scene when you hear all this!"

"For pity's sake, Edith, speak to me! the young man exclaimed. "I love youm my life will be miserable without you. If you are free, why may I not hope? See! I don't even ask you to love me now. I will wait; I will be patient. My love is so great that it will win yours in return. O darling! say you will be my wife."

would cast him off—he must, for the first time in his life, begin to work—the old story of pinching and poverty, of darning and mending, would commence over again for her, poor food, poor clothes, all the untold ugliness and misery of penury. Love is a very good and pleasant thing, but not when bought at the price of all the glory and pleasure of the world.

She turned from the life she pictured with a shudder of abborrance. She should

with a shudder of abhorrence. She should say "Yes" to-morrow to Sir Victor Cath.

Then for a moment the thread of thought broke, and she sat looking blankly out at the soft spring night. On the day she pledged herself to Sir Victor she must say good-by forever to Charley—so it began again. One house must not contain them both; her word, her plight must be kept bright and untarnished—Charley must go. She rose, feeling cold and cramped—she undressed with stiffened fingers, and went to bed.

She slept, deeply, dreamlessly. The supplications of the supplication of the supplication of the supplication.

She slept, deeply, dreamlessly. The sun-light was pouring into her room, flooding it with golden radiance, when she awoke. She sprang up; her heart gave one bound of recollection and rapture. Sir Victor had asked her to be his wife.

Doubt was at an end—hesitation was at

She sang as she dressed. Not the May sunshine itself was brighter than her face. She left her room, she walked down the cordor, down the stairs, and out upon the

a few yards off, pacing restlessly about and amoking. He flung away his cigar and hurried up to her. One glance at her smiling face was enough, his own flushed deep with

rapture.

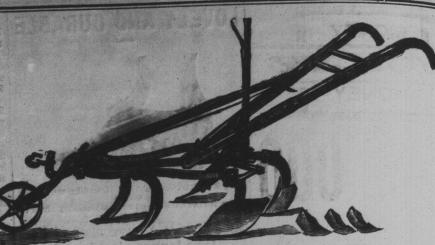
"I have come for my answer," he cried.
"O Edith, my darling, don't let it be 'Mo."

She laughed aloud at his vehemence—ft was, the sort of wooing she liked.

"I should like to please you, Sir Victor—what, then, shall it be?"

"Yes! a thousand times, yes! Edith, my love—my love—yes?"

She was smiling still—she looked him frankly in the eyes as no woman on earth, (To be Continued.)



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