"It's no good. I can't marry him, and I won't! We have enough to live on, mummie dear, without my marrying a horrid old man."

Delia Nugent threw down her hairbrush with such violence that it bounced from the dressing-table to the floor, and her mother started and trembled. Her nerves were weakened by long illness. Delia knew it; generally she moved like a mouse.

invalid's soft voice from among the white shawls in the easy-chair, "and Colonel Raymond is not old,-he cannot be forty yet. I remember him at all horrid; he was quite handsome, and had very pretty manners, my dear."

"I dare say," Delia picked up the white silk stockings from the bed and swung them round and round. "He may have been nice then, when he was young, but now he's old and horrid. Why, he was a man at Oxford when I was choking myself with the coral bells his father gave me for a christening present! Bah! I've no patience with the people who make such wills. It's wicked; it's horrible; it's unnatural! Now, mummie darling, let me help you to your room and send Slater to you. It's too late for little mothers to be sitting up. I'll promise to see him, but I can't promise to do more than that."

"It's for your sake, my pet," the mother answered as she rose wearily leaning on the strong, young arm that supported her to her room. should die more easily if I knew your future was secure."

"You're not going to die, my precious precious," the girl answered chec ally; but she bit her lip to keep back the sudden tears. "You're going to live and get real well once more. That's what we came to the Riviera for, you know, my dearest."

When Miss Nugent came back to her room she finished her toilette showed in the long mirror-bright, fair hair, and a mutinous, charming gown was on, the pearls round the pretty neck, the flowers adjusted on the slender figure, it was a vision that might have turned a hundred heads in a single evening, and none could have been astonished at the sudden turning.

The Nugents were staying in a quiet town some six miles from Cannes. Tonight, Delia was to be taken to a grand reception, where she was to meet the man whom fate and her godfather had designed for her husband. The situation as set forth in old Mr. Raymond's will was simplicity itself. If Delia married Colonel Raymond, half the old man's fortune was hers her share and half his went to the person. Delia danced fourteen times turn away, indifferent,-condemn-Society for the Free Distribution of with Colonel Raymond. Lord and Lady atory even. After the unmasking, India-Rubber Shoes Among the Natives of the African Swamps. While Delia was cowering among her white furs in the carriage on the way to Lady Denbigh's, where she was to dine and then attend the reception, a sudden thought struck her.

She sat motionless during her sixmile drive, and, as the carriage door opened, she sprang out with a firm things!" step, and a face alight with a new resolve. Lady Denbigh was her old school friend, newly married, and married, as it happened, to a man who had been Colonel Raymond's college chum.

When the after dinner moment came, Delia, alone with her hostess, dear.

Lady Denbigh laughed and Delia unfolded her plan-her great idea.

in a great armchair, and Delia was sarnestly in the mirror.

ng ?"

"I'll tell you as we go along?" his him to marry, was intolerable. wife answered. "Delia isn't coming to a masked ball."

"But Raymond ?", he said,

"Don't be detestable," she said, smil- well enough!" She forced a shrill tit- among the myrtle and lentiscus ing at him. "Do as your pretty lady ter. It was her crowning stroke. It bushes on the rocky coast, the dark tells you."

"Mademoiselle is right," he answered, and offered his arm to his wife. we return for you."

When Delia found herself alone she looked once more in the glass, and maid to come to her.

the Casino des Fleurs and set foot on the red carpet of its steps. Their figures were shrouded in dominoes, and a third shrouded figure was with them. All three wore little black vel-"My income dies with me," said the vet masks. A fourth masked figure advanced to meet them-a figure round whose broad shoulders the ready-made domino, hastily bought, refused to meet. The white shirt-front and the

it. They're the English Royal arms strong face, a face in the prime of knowing them anywhere."

stared as they passed.

mask.

"I have never been to a masked ball before, he said to his companion. "Have you?"

"Oh, yes," said the lady with the silver lions, "dozens-thousands. I-I almost live at masked balls, don't ing should aford. you know."

dozen notes above her own sweet, low off. Remember, I've not seen your key, and spoke in a sharp, thin stac- face since dinner." cato. Lady Denbigh pinched her husband's arm and laughed.

ing well."

"I wish she hadn't done it," he rejoined. "Raymond is a good sort. It seems hardly fair."

The great ballroom was crowded. rapidly. It was a pretty vision that | Monks and clowns. fisher-girls and shepherdesses, Queens of Hearts, brigands, Kings, Queens, and dominoes When the white, transparent innumerable thronged the space under the galleries. The smooth floor, bare but for the passing of here and there a stray couple, gleamed invitingly. The band broke into a waltz. Delia and her escort made two steps forward and glided into the measure of it. Not a word was spoken until the last chord of the waltz crashed like a heavy finis across the page of warm, pulsating life.

Delia turned to her partner.

"You can waltz," she said abruptly, and Raymond lifting his eyebrows under the black mask, replied: "You do me too much honor!""

The most amusing thing about a masked ball is that you may dance and half Colonel Raymond's; if not, as many times as you like with one Denbigh had been married for three months, and, being singularly constituted seemed to enjoy dancing with each other more than waltzing with other people.

"We are doing them a kindness," said Delia in the high-pitched voice, "by dancing so much together. It leaves them free,-the dear, silly

"to prefer dancing with your wife to dancing with anyone else?"

"Absurd!" Delia laughed, noisily, but the laugh did not ring quite

chosen, Delia chattered to her cavacaught her by the hands and called lier all things in heaven and earth; her her only friend and her dearest and o all things she spoke flippantly irreverently, and when she could remember to do it, with silly irrationality. Her companion grew more and When Lord Denbigh joined them his more silent. In his mind a growing | self. wife was in convulsions of laughter conviction thrust out small talk. Every now and then he found himself standing on the hearth-rug looking making phrases about Miss Nugent. "Commonplace as cabbage, vulgar as "We ought to be starting, my dear,' a pork-butcher's daughter; flippant, er anxiously, "and your eyes-what he said. "What is this supreme, this frivolous, a flirt;" and he grew more neffable joke which you are enjoy- and more certain that this Miss Nu-

"Money," she said, as they sat sipwith us, so we won't stay long. We're ping pink " grenadines," on the vercoming back to fetch her, and then anda, and looking out on the manywe'll go to the masked ball at the colored lights of the illuminated gar-Casino des Fleurs. Delia has never been dens. "Oh!" I would do anything away, but the freshness of early for money! It is the one thing worth having in this tiresome world. You the memories of childhood. Delia blushed and stamped her foot. and I, Colonel Raymond, know that

took effect. Nugent," he said sternly. And Delia, Mediterranean, was suddenly aware "We will take Colonel Raymond in the hot hiding of her mask, hugged of a human presence breaking the with us, of course," said Lady Den- herself for her cunning, "He would charm of the morning's perfect still- the gray green of the clives; "it

bigh, rising. "Good-by, Miss White- not marry me now," she thought, ness. The masked ball, and his meetgown! Try to amuse yourself until "though it cost him the half of his ing with the bride, the dark browed, Kingdom.'"

Then she felt secure and left the had chosen for him, had left him talk to him. And presently a little sleepless. He had tossed through a once more laughed softly to herself. chill fell on her; for, cold and formal restless hour, and then, through the Then she ran upstairs, two steps at as his talk was, it was not the talk pink glow of the sunrise, had wana time, and rang for Lady Denbigh's of a fool or a dotard. Again and again | dered out along the Nice road, past she found him voicing sentiments the white sands and darkening fir which she could have echoed, and the trees of Jean de Pins, and so through Lord and Lady Denbigh drove up to severity, the quiet power of the man the dusky orchards and by sleeping awed and, at the same time, charmed her. Round them the crowd of mer- Cap d'Antibes. And there he rested, rymakers surged and flowed and ebby reflecting on many things; there, too, ed. The time for unmasking drew near, and Delia trembled a little.

"It would have been enough without that!" she thought, bitterly, seeing the stern set of the man's lips below the mask.

The signal to unmask came at supas a youth. At that time he was not black cloth showed plainly beneath. per. Lady Denbigh's sweet, flushed "Colonel Raymond, let me present face appeared from behind the black you to Miss Nugent," whispered Lady | velvet, then her husband's jolly, laugh-Denbigh. "Now, nobody has any ing eyes. Then Raymond, after the names-only you'll know us because hesitation of a moment, loosed the my domino is green, which these strings of his mask. He laid it on the French people abhor-and Miss Nu- table, and Delia looked on the face of gent's is black, with silver lions on the "horrid old man." She saw a lions, so your loyalty insures your manhood, bronzed by the Eastern sun, a pair of good blue eyes, straight, The party went slowly up the broad, well-cut features and the mouth she red-carpeted stairs. Groups of mask- had watched all the evening, stern him, stopped singing, passed him, and ed dancers, gathered about the doors, in repose, yet softening to a singular sweetness as he turned to answer Colonel Raymond frowned under the some gentle frivolity of Lady Denbigh.

> Several young French officers, attracted by the grace of outline, which Delia's domino had been powerless to disguise, were hovering near, awaiting the revelation which her unmask-

"Come, Delia," said Lady Denbigh, She had pitched her voice half a "You'll be glad to get that hot mask

Delia drew a long breath and suddenly tore off the mask. Her friend "She is a born actress. She is act- only just managed to suppress a lite tle cry, or rather she could not suppress it, but she turned it, at the last moment, into a cough.

> Delia let the hood of her domino fall back, as she removed the mask, and the watchful young Frenchmen saw a dark head, crowned with black hair, coarse, ill-arranged, a swarthy face and neck, eyebrows black as garden slugs, and a mouth, straight, hard and much too red. The hair was parted in the middle, and strained tightly back above the ears-little shell-pink ears which Delia had never thought of disguising. Her eyes, too; they flashed clear hazel fire at the young Lieutenant, who exclaimed, audibly: "Yes, all English women are frights-except as to eyes and ears."

Delia pulled the hood of her domino over the black hair and laughed.

The Frenchmen turned away. Delia surprised herself in a sigh. When, ever since you can remember, people have turned round to look at you in the street because you were so pretty, it comes somewhat as shock when eyes pass over you, and Colonel Raymond was more polite than before. Lord and Lady Denbigh were in the highest spirits. Delia laughed a good deal.

When she was tucked up in her carriage among her white furs she began to cry. She cried all the way home. The basket on the front seat, which held her pretty tulle balldress, jolted forward on her knees, "Do you think it silly," he asked, and hurt her. She pushed it back angrily, and cried more than ever.

When she reached home the pink sumrise glory was flashing the Alpes Maritimes. She tore off her domino and scrubbed her face and neck till In the high, shrill voice she had its own fairness reappeared. Then she slipped on a lace trimmed wrapper and crept in to see if her mother was asleep.

Mrs. Nugent was not asleep. So Delia sat down by her bed, and told her how much she had enjoyed her-

"But I was quite right about Colonel Raymond. He is detestable," she said.

"You look flushed," said the mothhave you been doing to them?"

"It was the sunrise," said Delia, gent, whom his father had desired stooping to kiss her mother tenderly, so that her face was hidden in the shadow. "It shone in my eyes all the way home."

> The rosy flush of sunrise had died morning still lay on the land, pure as

Colonel Raymond, lounging at ease pine woods behind him, and before "You should speak for yourself, Miss | him the diamond-set sapphire of the

shrill-tongued bride whom his father villas, to the wild eastern side of the he met his fate.

A girl in a gown of bright dark blue,-the color of a peacock where he is bluest,-came along the rugged path between the myrtles. Her hair shone like gold in the new sunlight, her hat hung in her hand,-a large white hat. She had stuck pink roses in its broad ribbon, and she came toward him, unconscious of his presence, swinging the hat by its white strings, and singing;

"An' ye are the laddie that gave me the penny,

The lad that I'll lo'e till the day that I dee."

Her voice was soft and singularly sweet. Colonel Raymond jumped up from his lentiscus bush; the girl saw as she passed she bowed. He raised his hat mechanically.

He stood looking after her. She knew him, then! And he,-could he possibly have seen her before and forgotten her? That bright hair; that charming profile,-No; he could never have forgotten these; and yet there was something familiar --

Colonel Raymond was a man of action. He made six strides and caught up with her.

"I did not recognize you for the moment," he said abruptly.

She raised laughing eyes to his. "And do you recognize me now?" she asked. "No; don't begin to try to get out of it; you had forgotten me. My name is Carmichael," so it was,-Delia Carmichael Nugent, "and we have danced together once or twice, Colonel Raymond."

The spell of the morning was working in his blood, and with it the spell of her bright beauty.

"If I might --- Might I walk with you, Miss Carmichael?" he asked wistfully. And together they passed on among the myrtles and the gray rocks.

That morning is marked in Colonel Raymond's memory with the whitest of white stones. She walked with him, she talked to him, in the lowest, most delightful voice in the world, of all things in heaven and earth, talked gently, gayly, reverently, and always charmingly. She opened the storehouse of her mind to him, and let him see, in brief, bewildering flashes, glimpses of the treasure-house of her

Of her heart he saw nothing on night later, when he strode through the pine woods, by the white sand and through the dewy orchards, by the sleeping villas, to bid her good-by. They had met every day since that first day, at first by chance,-a chance tutored by Delia, afterward by design; a design formed and carried out by Raymond,-lastly by an unspoken agreement more dear than either.

They sat on a fallen olive tree, amid the deep grass that gleamed wet with dew, and transfigured in the morning's level light. And--

"I am going away to-morrow," he

She only turned her eyes and look-

ed straight in his.

He drew a quick breath. She looked at him steadily, and two large tears gathered in her eyes; slid over the soft lashes, and fell on the hands crossed in her lap.

"Than you do care," he cried quickly,-incredulously almost,-but his arms went round her.

"Why must you go?" she asked presently.

"Because my father desired me to keep this Christmas at our own house. There is a girl,-he wished me to marry her,-and he wished me to entertain her and her mother at this season."

"Is there any condition attached to your marrying her?"

He laughed; "Nothing serious," he said, "I lose a little money if I don't. And so does she. That's the worst of it. But I couldn't-oh, my dear. But I shall make it up to her in some other way."

"The girl opened her lips to speak Then she closed them sharply, and lifted them to his to be kissed.

"My father," he went on, "once loved this girl's mother, and he wished,but it couldn't be, and if he knows now he will understand. He wished me to marry her, and,-he loved old customs; he wished me to lead her out before the tenants on Christmas Day, and kiss her under the mistletoe. as a sign that,-it sounds silly, doesn't it ?"

"No," she said, looking out through

sounds very pretty,-if you had loved

"Ah-if! But it is you I love. I only met her once. I think she loath. ed me almost as much as I detested Delia's heart gave a throb, half joy,

"Poor girl," she said gently. Raymond laughed low and kissed her smooth cheek.

half pain.

"Oh, love," he said, "it is too hard, -to win you, and then to leave you! But in the very earliest of the New Year I shall come back, and then

"Will you kiss me when you see me again?" asked Delia suddenly, looking earnestly at him, "wherever it is?" "If you will,-if you are gracious enough to permit me to-"

"It's a promise," she said, and they strolled through the orchard toward their parting.

All the tenants were gathered together for the merrymaking or Christmas Eve. Over the last Christmas the shadow of death had lain thick and heavy, but this year the old hall was hung with garlands of evergreen,-holly, yew and laurel, -and every window ablaze with light.

Raymond was nervously picturing his meeting with the shrill-voiced, black-haired lady whom his father's last wishes had designed for him, and the thought of the golden-haired girl who had won his heart among the olive gardens only comforted him by moments. The situation was, at best, an unfortunate one. Miss Nugent had arrived late,-too late for dinner; he should see her first in the ballroom, among the tenants. They all of them must know of the terms of his father's will. What whisperings and nudgings, what sly smiles, what covert jests--

He shuddered, and his other guests found him an absent-minded, albeit a courteous, host. Lord and Lady Denbigh alone seemed not to notice his abstraction. The moment was nearing. Raymond grew more and more nervous. He turned to his old college chum, Lord Denbigh, for sup-

"Beastly nuisance, I know," said the peer cheerfully; "still you must go through with it, -some way."

The ballroom was crowded. Only in the middle, where the great bough of gray-green mistletoe swung from the hundred-lighted crystal chandelier, was an empty space. The color of the mistletoe reminded Raymond of the olive gardens. He passed from group to group, talking to old men who had known him as a boy, and to young men whom he had known as boys, when he and they went a-rabbiting together in his father's woods, many a good year

Suddenly there was a stir near the door. Raymond turned, to see Lady Denbigh glide forward into the empty lighted space in the middle of the room. With her came a girl in white, a girl with golden hair and eyes that shone,-his maid of the olives and the sunrise.

He made three steps forward. "Your promise," she whispered;

your promise." He stooped as she stood beneath

the mistletoe, and kissed her upturned Then rose a storm of deafening

cheers from the tenants. Through it all he felt her hand in his, and heard as in a dream Lady Denbigh's voice saying, "Curtain! Curtain! This is that morning. That came a fort- Delia Nugent. Oh, what a charming end to the comedy! Curtain!" A few hours later he and she stood

alone before the fire in the great hall. Mrs. Nugent, tired with travel and happiness, had retired on Lady Denbigh's arm. Lord Denbigh had suddealy experienced that strange longing which only a good cigar can assuage. The two were alone, and she had told him everything. "You do forgive me, don't you?"

she urged, clinging to his arm. "I do so love play-acting, and I thought you were a horrid old man, and I didn't want you to like me; only, as soon as I saw you I knew--" "And did you mean to meet me the

her soft hair. She flashed indignant denial at him. "You know I didn't! No; that

next day?" he questioned, stroking

morning, and everything was entire ly your doing." "You didn't wish me to like you then,-that first morning,-when

we met among the myrtles?" "Of course not," she answered, but she hid her face. "Perhaps," he went on, laughing a

little for pure happiness, and turning her face till her eyes met his, "perhaps you didn't wish me to like you now?"

"Of course not," she answered, lightly. Then, as her eyes met his, she hid her face again on his shoul-

"And so all ends happily," he went on, holding her closely, "and we both have our fortunes, and--"

"Ah, don't," she cried, "as if the fortune mattered! I'm glad of it, though-because my mother is glad. But as for you and me! Oh, my dear! I am glad you loved me when you thought I was losing you a fortune, instead of bringing you one. It will be something to hold to my heart all my life long."

"And as for my heart," he answered, "it is you I shall hold to my heart all my life long-all our happy lives

long, my darling!" The hall clock had struck the hour, and from beyond the park, across the frozen snow, came the sweet jingle of the Christmas bells.

She turned sweet, wet eyes on him. "I don't deserve to be so happy." she said, "and God is very good to