

"Really, though, I don't know that I'll tell you—but it is so absurd. Why, a wedding in the Bois!"

"By heaven!" he said vigorously, "I wish it were a wedding—here."

"As you said," she admitted, "it has its funny side—and the policeman is still following us and all the people are staring."

"I'm past minding that now."

"I do believe that we've met every one I ever saw in my life before. The town empty in August! Why, absolutely everyone is here. And everyone will tell everyone else."

"I'm awfully sorry," he said. "Of course it will be disagreeable for you, and I should have tried to jump out long ago."

"And broken your leg or something, so that I should have had to see about faking care of you. That would have been worse."

"And now you will hate me more than ever," he groaned.

"No one will believe that I do, after I have been seen riding about with you like this for hours."

"What a mockery!" he cried. "And how can I bear the irony of it when they begin to congratulate me!"

"Oh," she exclaimed suddenly, "do

you believe they will dare — do you imagine they'll think we are engaged?"

"Certainly," he replied with conviction.

"How horrible!" she said, again shrinking back again into the corner. "Oh, what shall we do?"

"There is one way that would be very simple."

"And what is that?" she asked, meekly.

"Really become engaged," he answered boldly.

"Oh!" she cried in consternation.

"You know how I love you. And now this has happened—why—it would save you a lot of annoyance."

"I should never become engaged to anyone to save myself from annoyance, Mr. Brooke."

"And I'll make you love me—you know that you liked me a little before that happened."

"I am glad you reminded me of it. All that has happened, and for a moment I had forgotten. No, you cannot expect that I can forget that. Oh, don't you think, perhaps, that the machine is going a little slower?"

"Not a bit," he answered, uncompromisingly. "But it was only such a little thing."

"A little thing!"

"Well," he continued, "I can imagine your being angry, if you thought I had tried to kiss you, for you are so different — so far above and beyond all the rest. I can understand that you might never have forgiven me then."

"I can't forgive you now," she answered.

"And is this really to be the end?" he asked her, leaning forward as if to take her hands, and then, as he remembered the pursuing policeman and the gaping crowd, drawing back.

"Oh, it must be, indeed," she gasped, "if this ever stops."

"Then I'm going to tell you the truth," he said, with the air of one who has reached a desperate resolve. "It will only make you hate me more and more, but you might as well understand. It was false when I said that I mistook you for some one else."

"Oh!" she murmured.

"Yes," he went on resolutely. "I knew that it was you all the time, but I was madly in love with you. Then when you were so indignant—so very furious—I was in consternation—awfully rattled, you know—and I thought about you as being on a pedestal, you see—so that what I had done was a profanation—and I said anything to get out of it. I couldn't bear to have you think that I could have been so bold—so mad—as to think of kissing you—so I told you what I did. But I've told you the truth now, and I know you loathe me, and you need not say anything."

It evidently did not please Miss Ingle to answer, for she sat in silence, looking thoughtfully before her. And when she spoke, it was not to say anything bearing upon the subject under discussion.

"Really," she observed at last with singular gentleness, "I believe that at last we are actually going slower."

Indeed, it was the fact. Gradually, with weakening force, the wheels revolved, dragging over the pavement as if weary of the long journey. The power was nearly spent, and as the speed diminished it almost seemed as if tired muscles and sinews were giving out, instead of wheels and bars ceasing to work. At last the huge vehicle came to a standstill.

"I'll have to take your names, you know," said the policeman, coming up, getting slowly from his bicycle, and wiping his brow, while the crowd gathered in thick and close.

"All right," said Brooke, and drawing him aside for a moment he spoke to him in an undertone; then he quickly returned to Miss Ingle.

"Can't we get out of this?" she cried. "There," she exclaimed, "is a cab! Put me in that."

Brooke signalled to the watching cabman, and the vehicle was quickly drawn up before them, while the crowd fell back a little, urged by the breathless policeman.

Miss Ingle jumped in, the bags and wraps were put in after her, and she had nearly closed the door when she paused, still holding it open a little, and looked at Brooke.

"Yes," he said, "I suppose it is goodbye at last. And please don't think any worse of me than you must."

"And you are sure," demanded the girl suddenly, "that it was I that you meant to kiss. It was very dark, with only the fire-light."

"Sure," said Brooke indignantly. "I should think I was! Hadn't I watched you and followed you into the library? Do you suppose I could have been thinking of anybody else? Of course it was you; and you know the truth, and you must hate me for such madness, and—that's all of it."

"Why," said Miss Ingle slowly, "of course if that is certainly so, and you are sure—positively sure—why—"

"Yes," he said despondently.

"Why," she said swiftly, "you are asked to stay with the Auchinlecks, and you had better come with me, for I am sure they will be delighted to have you—and—and so shall I!"

"And you are not angry with me?" exclaimed the young man, tearing open the door and precipitately entering the cab.

"I was," said Miss Ingle enigmatically; "But I'm not now."

"Oh!" exclaimed Brooke fervently, "bless the automobile and all its kind."

"Indeed," said the girl, "it was a nice bumbly old thing."

"Why don't you marry Evelyn? Don't you think you could support her?"

"Support her! Why I couldn't even pay for her complexion."

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