

him in the darkness, the expression of her eyes, her face as they had stood that moment alone. The force of passion that surprised him then swept over him again. He made a step to return. He would go to the theatre, endure last night's scathing, live through the hell of her scorn for his prototype all over again for the joy of her glance, her voice!

No, it must not be!

Once before he had given way to a terrible temptation. This was part of the price he owed for his fame! He had drilled himself to denial and negation in the past to some purpose, for he put a strong hand on himself now; his passion must not be petted and humoured. It had come to him too late.

He raised his head, and went off at a quick pace to the extreme end of the gardens. In the street he looked cityward again. He was torn with the conflict: should he gaze on her once more, or go home?

He hailed a passing cab. For a moment he hesitated on the pavement before he instructed the man. Was it to be "The Princess" or Toorak?

"Toorak!" he said, as he sprang in.

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All that morning Ruth Opie had sat in the shop of "The Little Dustpan," wearing her afternoon gown of black.

"Tez ole right," she informed any objecting power. She knew what she was about. She wasn't going to demean "the lad." For the first time in her life she felt pity for "they poor things" whose life was made up chiefly of housework, and had no great glory on which to gaze. "But don't Ee go a-thinkin', dear Lord, that I dedun fancy that theer life was 'ard. I've taasted et—and aafter bit av wile et dedun smill so good."

She sat directly in front of the stall, swelling with communicativeness. Chinamen went by stolidly as though nothing unusual had transpired. Draggled women passed, news boys, dingy vehicles, the odds and ends of Melbourne. A street band

stopped opposite and played "I Dreamt that I Dwelt in Marble Halls" and "When Other Lips and Other Hearts." When regular or chance customers came she had always the some question: "Dedun ee go see play laast night? Anyhow, I do wish ee had. Aw, my dear, 'twer heaven sure 'nuff."

She had talked herself hoarse. Her little maid had swept the hearth and piled up the fire, and taken her departure for the day, when with the lighting of the lamps and the hour for tea she began to feel lonely. The table was spread as for a festival. She went back into the parlour and still waited, hoping that Frank would come. Tea drinking without him was a poor sort of business. She peeped under the cover at the hot tea-cakes, then went back to the shop to look out anxiously. A carriage drew up to the door, and Frank alighted and handed out a lady.

Ruth's sudden joy at sight of him was chilled. It had come, then, the bereavement she had feared? The lady, a vision in violet and fur, was standing before her with tremulous lips and shining eyes.

"Dear Ruth," said Frank, taking her hand, "this is my sister. Caroline, this is my dear adopted mother."

Caroline's gloved hand closed over the shaking hands stretched out. There was appeal in the faded face.

"You must let me be your daughter. My brother has told me of the past two years."

"Iss. It be no good hummin' and haain' 'bout et. I ded feel et a blessed time, plaise sure."

The two women looked at one another in silence for a moment, then Caroline bent forward and kissed her. This old Cornish-woman had memory in her love but for what she had received. Of the spending she had taken no account.

Instinctively Caroline understood how her coming might seem to claim Frank from Ruth's affection. But she put forth no claim, but tactfully gave the loving heart its place. She made a favour of being asked