about the brother-in-law and quite a lot about himself. But really, he says hardly one word about Sibylla!" Now it was, of course, about Sibylla that Mrs. Raymore had wanted to hear.

Late afternoon found Grantley cantering over the downs toward Fairhaven. Sibylla had been staying the night there with a Mrs. Valentine, a friend of hers, and was to return by the omnibus which plied to and from Milldean. Their plan was that he should meet her and she should dismount, leaving her luggage to be delivered. He loved his horse and had seized the opportunity of slipping in a ride. When she joined him he would get off and walk with her. As he rode now he was not in the calm mood which had dictated his letter. He was excited and eager at the prospect of meeting Sibylla again; he was exulting in the success of his love, instead of contemplating with satisfaction the orderly progression of his life. But he had not, and he knew he had not, quite the freedom from self-consciousness which marks a youthful passion. The eagerness was there, but he was not surprised, although he was gratified to find it there. His ardor was natural enough to need no nursing, yet Grantley was inclined to caress it. He laughed as he let his horse stretch himself in a gallop; he was delighted and a trifle amused to find his emotions so fresh; none of the luxury, none of the pleasure giving power had gone out of them. He was still as good a lover as any man.

He was cantering over the turf thirty or forty yards from the road when the omnibus passed him. The driver cried his name and pointed back with his whip. Grantley saw Sibylla a long way behind. He touched his horse with the spur and galloped toward her. Now she stood still waiting for him. He came up to her at full speed, reined in and leaped off. Holding his bridle and his hat in one hand, with the other he took hers and, bowing over it, kissed it. His whole approach was gallantly conceived and carried out.

"Ah, you—you come to me like Sir Galahad!" murmured Sibylla.

"My dear, Sir Galahad! A banker Sir Galahad!"

"Well, do bankers kiss the hands of paupers?"

"Bankers of love would kiss the hands of its millionaires."

"And am I a millionaire of love?"

Grantley let go her hand and joined in her laugh at their little bout of conceits. She carried it on, but merrily now, not in the almost painful strain of delight which had made her first greeting sound half choked.

"Haven't I given it all to you—to a dishonest banker, who'll never let me have it back?"

"We pay interest on large accounts," Grantley reminded her.

"You'll pay large, large interest to me?"

She laid her hand on his arm and it rested there as they began to walk, the good horse Rollo pacing soberly beside them.

"All the larger if I've embezzled the principal! That's always the way, you know." He stopped suddenly, laughing, "It's quite safe!" and kissed her.

He held her face a moment, looking into the depths of her dark eyes. Now he forgot to be amused at himself or even gratified. If he was not a boy-lover, it was not because he advanced with less ardor, but that he advanced with more knowledge; not because he abandoned himself less, but that he knew to what the self-abandonment was.

She walked along with a free swing under her short cloth skirt; evidently she could walk thus for many a mile with no slackening and no fatigue. The wind had caught her hair and blew it from under, and round about, and even over the flat cap of red that she wore; her eyes gazed and glowed and cried joy to him. There under the majestic spread of sky, amid the exhilaration of the salt-tasting air, on the green swell of the land, by the green and blue and white of the sea, she was an intoxication. Grantley breathed quickly as he walked with her hand on his wrist.

"It's so new," she whispered in a joyful apology. "I've never been in love before. You have! Oh, of course you have! I don't mind that—not now. I used to before—before you told me. I used to be very jealous. I couldn't be jealous now—except of not being allowed to love you enough."

"When I'm with you I've never been in love before."

"I don't believe you ever have—not really. I don't believe you could—without me to help you!" She laughed at her boast as she made it, drumming her fingers lightly on his arm; his blood seemed to register each separate touch with a beat for each. "When we're married, Grantley, you shall give me a horse, such a good horse, such a fast horse—as good and as fast as dear old Rollo. And we'll ride—we'll ride together—oh, so far and so fast, against the wind, right against it breathlessly! We'll mark the setting sun, and we'll ride straight for it, never stopping, never turning. We'll ride straight into the gold, both of us together, and let the gold swallow us up!"

"A bizarre ending for a respectable West-end couple!"

"No ending! We'll do it every day!" She turned to him suddenly, saying: "Ride now. You mount—I'll get up behind you."

"What? You'll be horribly uncomfortable!"

"Who's thinking of comfort? Rollo can carry us easily. Mount, Grantley, mount! Don't go straight home. Ride along the cliff. Come, mount, mount!"

She was not to be denied. When he was mounted, she set her foot lightly on his and he helped her up.

"My arm around your waist!" she cried. "Why, I'm splendid here! Gallop, Grantley, gallop! Think somebody's pursuing us and trying to take me away."

"Must poor Rollo drop down dead?"

"No, but we'll pretend he will!"

Now and then he cried something back to her as they rode; but for the most part he knew only her arm about him, the strands of her hair brushing against his cheek as the wind played with them, her short quick breathing behind him. The powerful horse seemed to join in the revel, so strong and easy was his gait as he pulled playfully and tossed his head. They were alone in the world, and the world was very simple—the perfect delight of the living body, the unhindered union of soul with soul—all nature fostering, inciting, applauding. It was a great return to the earliest things, and nothing lived save those. They rode more than King and Queen, they rode god and goddess in the youth of the world, descended from High Olympus to take their pleasure on the earth. They rode far and fast against the wind, against it breathlessly. They rode into the gold, and the gold swallowed them up.

The blood was hot in him and when he heard her gasp "Stop!" he would pay no heed. He turned the horse's head toward home, but they went at a gallop still. He felt her head fall against his shoulder. It rested there. Her breath came quicker, faster, he seemed to see her bosom rising and falling in stress. But he did not stop. Again her voice came, strangled and faint:

"I can't bear any more. Stop! Stop!"

One more wild rush and he obeyed. He was quivering all over when they came to a stand. Her hold round him grew loose; she was about to slip down. He turned round in his saddle and caught her about the waist with his arm. He drew her off the horse and forward to his side. He held her thus with his arm, exulting in the struggle of his muscles. He held her close against him and kissed her face. When he let her go and she reached earth, she sank on the ground and covered her face with both hands, all her body shaken with her gasps. He sat on his horse for a moment, looking at her. He drew a deep inspiration, and brushed drops of sweat from his brow. He was surprised to find that there seemed now little wind, that the sun was veiled in clouds, that a wagon passed along the road, that a dog barked from a farmhouse, that the old ordinary humdrum world was there.

He heard a short stifled sob.

"You're not angry with me?" he said. "I wasn't rough to you? I couldn't bear to stop at first."

She showed him her face. Her eyes were full of tears; there was a deep glow on her cheeks, generally so pale. She sprang to her feet and stood by his horse, looking up at him.

"I angry? You rough? It has been more than I knew happiness could be. I had no idea joy could be like that, no idea life had anything like that. And you ask me if I am angry and if you were rough! You're opening life to me, showing me why it is good, why I have it, why I want it, what I'm to do with it. You're opening it all to me. And all the beauties come out of your dear hand, Grantley. Angry! I know only that you're doing this for me, only that I must give you in return, in a poor return, all I have and am and can be—must give you my very, very self."

He was in a momentary reaction of feeling; his earnestness was almost somber as he answered:

"God grant you're doing right!"

"I'm doing what I must do, Grantley."

He swung himself off his horse, and the ready smile came to his face.

"I hope you'll find the necessity a permanent one," he said.

She too laughed joyfully as she submitted to his kiss.

It was her whim, urged with the mock imperiousness of a petted slave, that he should mount again, and she walked by his horse. Thus they wended their way home through the peace of the evening. She talked now of how he had first come into her life, of how she had begun to— She hesitated, ending, "How I began first to feel you—" and of how, little by little, the knowledge of the feeling had disclosed itself. She was wonderfully open and simple very direct and unabashed; yet there was nothing that even his fastidious and much-tested taste found indelicate or even forward. In glad confidence she told all, careless of keeping any secrets or any defenses against him. The seed had quickened in virgin soil, and the flower had sprung up in a night—almost by magic, she seemed to fancy. He listened tenderly and indulgently. The flame of his emotion had burnt down, but there was an afterglow which made him delightfully content with her, interested and delighted in her, still more thoroughly satisfied with what he had done, even more glad that she was different from all the others with whom he had been thrown. While she displayed to him at once the joy and the spontaneity of her abandonment of her whole existence and self to him, she made him surer of his wisdom in taking her and all she offered, more convinced of the excellence of this disposition of his life. She could give him all he pictured as desirable—the stretches of tranquillity, the moments of strong feeling. She had it in her to give both, and she would give all she had to give. In return he gave her his love. No analysis seemed needful there. He gave her the love of his heart and the shelter of his arm; what more he could give her the afternoon had shown. But in the end it was all contained and summed up in a word—he gave his love.

They came to the crest of the hill where the road dipped down to Milldean, and paused there.

"What a wonderful afternoon it's been!" she sighed.

The enchantment of it hung about her still, expressing itself in the gleam of her eyes and in her restlessness.

"It's been a very delightful one," he leaned down and whispered to her. "It's given us something to look back on always."

"Yes, a great thing to look back on. But even more to look forward to. It's told us what life is going to be, Grantley. And to think that life used to mean only that!"

She waved her hand toward Milldean.

Grantley laughed in sheer enjoyment of her. Amusement mingled with his admiration. His balance had quite come back to him. A review of the afternoon, of their wild ride, made him give part of his amusement to his own share in the proceedings. But who expects a man, or need expect himself, to be wise when he is in love? If there be a chartered season for sweet folly, it is there.

"Can we always be careering over the downs in the teeth of the wind, riding into the gold, Sibylla?" he asked her in affectionate mockery.

She looked up at him, answering simply:

"Why not?"

He shook his head with a whimsical smile.

"Whatever else there is, our hearts can be riding together still."

"And when we're old folks? Isn't it only the young who can ride like that?"

She stood silent for a moment or two. Then she turned her eyes up to his in silence still, with the color shining bright on her cheeks. She took his hand and kissed it. He knew the thought that his words had called into her mind. He had made the girl think that, when they were old, the world would not be; there would be young hearts still to ride, young hearts in whom their hearts should be carried still in the glorious gallop, young hearts which had drawn life from them.

They parted at the gate of Old Mill House. Grantley urged her to come up to his house in the evening and bring Jeremy with her, and laughed again when she said: "Bring Jeremy?" She was confused at the hint in his laughter, but she laughed too. Then growing grave, she went on:

"No, I won't come to-night. I won't see you again to-night. I want to realize it, to think it all over."

"Is it so complicated as that? You're looking very serious!"

She broke into a fresh laugh, a laugh of joyful confession.

"No, I don't want to think it over. I really want to live it over, to live it over alone, many, many times. To be alone with you again up on the downs there."

"Very well. Send Jeremy up. By now he must be dying for an argument, and he's probably not on speaking terms with Mrs. Mumple."

He gave her his hand; any warmer farewell there in the village street was quite against his ways and notions. He observed a questioning look in her eyes, but it did not occur to him that she was rather surprised at his wanting Jeremy to come up after dinner. She did not propose to spend any time with Jeremy.

"I'll tell him you want him," she said; and added in a whisper: "Good-by, good-by, good-by!"

He walked his horse up the hill, looking back once or twice to the gate where she stood watching him till a turn of the lane hid him from her sight. When that happened, he sighed in luxurious contentment, and took a cigarette from his case.

To her the afternoon had been a wonder-working revelation; to him it seemed an extremely delightful episode.

CHAPTER III.

The Worldly Mind.

For a girl of ardent temper and vivid imagination, strung to her highest pitch by a wonderful fairy ride and the still strange embrace of her lover, it may fairly be reckoned a trial to listen to a detailed comparison of the hero of her fancy with another individual, who has been sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude for attempted murder! Concede circumstances extenuating the crime as amply as you please (and my Lord in scarlet on the bench had not encouraged the jury to concede any), the comparison is one that gives small pleasure unless such as lies in an opportunity for the exercise of Christian patience. This particular virtue Jeremy Chiddingfold suspected of priestly origin; neither was at the strongest point in his sister's spiritual panoply. He regarded Sibylla's ill repressed irritation and irrepressible fidgeting with a smile of malicious humor.

"You might almost as well come up to Imason's," he whispered.

"She can't go on much longer!" moaned Sibylla.

But she could. For long years starved of fruition, her love reveled luxuriantly in retrospect and tenderly in prospect, and she was always good at going on and at going on along the same lines. Mrs. Mumple's loving auditors had heard the tale of Luke's virtues many times during the period of his absence (that was the term euphemistically employed). The ashes of their interest suddenly flickered up at the hint of a qualification which Mrs. Mumple unexpectedly introduced.

"He wasn't the husband for every woman," she said thoughtfully.

"Thank heaven!" muttered Jeremy, glad to escape the superhuman.

"Eh, Jeremy?"

She revolved slowly and ponderously toward him.

"Thank heaven he got the right sort, Mumples."

"He did," said Mrs. Mumples, emphatically, "and he knew it—and he'll know it again when he comes back, and that's only three years now."

A reference to this date was always the signal for a kiss from Sibylla. She rendered the tribute and returned to her chair, sighing desperately. But it was some relief that Mrs. Mumple had finished her parallel, with its list of ideal virtues, and now left Grantley out of the question.

"Why wasn't he the husband for every woman, Mumples?" inquired Jeremy as he lit his pipe. "They're all just alike, you know."

"You wait, Jeremy!"

"Bosh!" ejaculated Jeremy curtly.

"He liked them good-looking, to start with," she went on; "and I was good-looking." Jeremy had heard this so often that he no longer felt tempted to smile. "But there was more than that. I had tact."

"Oh, come now, Mumples! You had tact? You? I'm—well, I'm——"

"I had tact, Jeremy." She spoke with overpowering solidity. "I was there when he wanted me, and when he didn't want me I wasn't there, Sibylla."

"Didn't he always want you?" Brother and sister put the question simultaneously, but with a quite different intention.

"No, not always, dears—Is that your foot on my table? Take it off this instant, Jeremy!"

"Quite a few thousand years ago there was no difference between a foot and a hand, Mumples. You needn't be so fussy about it."

Sibylla got up and walked to the window. From it the lights in Grantley's dining-room were visible.

"I haven't seen him for ten years," Mrs. Mumple went on; "and you've known that, my dears, though you've said nothing—no, not when you'd have liked to have something to throw at me. But I never told you why."

Sibylla left the window and came behind Mrs. Mumple, letting her hand rest on the fat shoulder.

"He broke out at me once, and said he couldn't bear it if I came to see him. It upset him so, and the time wouldn't pass by, and he got thinking how long the time was and what it all meant. Oh, I can't tell you all he said before he was stopped by the—the man who was there. So I promised him I wouldn't go any more, unless he fell ill or wanted me. They said they'd let me know if he asked for me and was entitled to a visit. But word has never come to me, and I've never seen him."

She paused and stitched at her work for a minute or two.

"You must leave men alone sometimes," she said.

"But, Mumples, you?" whispered Sibylla.

Mrs. Mumple looked up at her, but made no answer. Jeremy flung down his book with an impatient air; he resented the approaches of emotion—especially in himself.

"He'll be old when he comes out—comes back—old and broken; they break quickly there. He won't so much mind my being old and stout, and he won't think so much of the time when I was young and he couldn't be with me; and he'll find me easier to live with; my temper's improved a lot these last years, Sibylla."

"You silly old thing!" said Sibylla.

But Jeremy welcomed a diversion.

"Rot!" he said. "It's only because you can't sit on us quite so much now. It's not moral improvement; it's simply impotence, Mumples."

Mrs. Mumple had risen in the midst of eulogizing the improvement of her temper, and now passed by Jeremy, patting his unwilling cheek. She went out, and the next moment was heard in vigorous altercation with their servant as to the defects of certain eggs.

"I couldn't have done that," said Sibylla.

"Improved your temper?"

"No, stayed away."

"No, you couldn't. You never let a fellow alone, even when he's got toothache."

"Have you got it now?" cried Sibylla, darting toward him.

"Keep off! Keep off! I haven't got it, and if I had I shouldn't want to be kissed."

Sibylla broke into a laugh. Jeremy relit his pipe with a secret smile.

"But I do call it fine of Mumples."

"Go and tell her you've never done her justice, and cry," he suggested. "I'm going up to Imason's now, so you can have it all to yourselves."

"I don't want to cry to-night," Sibylla objected, with a plain hint of mysterious causes for triumph.

Jeremy picked up his cap, showing a studious disregard of any such indications.

"You're going up the hill now? I shall sit up for you."

"You'll sit up for me?"

"Yes. Besides, I don't feel at all sleepy to-night."

"I shall when I come back."

"I shan't want to talk."

"Then what will you want? Why are you going to sit up?"

"I've ever so many things to do."

Jeremy's air was weary as he turned away from the inscrutable feminine. While mounting the hill he made up his mind to go to London as soon as he could. A man met men there.

No air of emotion, no atmosphere of overstrained sentiment, hung, even for Jeremy's critical eye, round Grantley Imason's luxurious table and establishment. They suggested rather the ideal of comfort lovingly pursued, a comfort which lay not in gorgeousness or in mere expenditure, but in the delicate adjustment of means to ends and a careful exclusion of anything likely to disturb a dexterously achieved equipoise. Though Jeremy admired the absence of emotion, his rough vigorous nature was challenged at another point. He felt a touch of scorn that a man should take so much trouble to be comfortable, and should regard the achievement of his object as so meritorious a feat. In various ways everything, from the gymnastic apparatus in the hall to the leg-rest in front of the study fire, sought and subserved the ease and pleasure of the owner. That, no doubt, is what a house should be—just as a man should be well dressed. It is possible, however, to be too much of a dandy. Jeremy found an accusation of unmanliness making its way into his mind; he had to banish it by recalling that, though his host might be fond of elegant lounging, he was a keen sportsman, too, and handled his gun and sat his horse with equal mastery. These virtues appealed to the English public school boy and to the amateur of Primitive Man alike, and saved Grantley from condemnation. But Jeremy's feelings escaped in an exclamation:

"By Jove, you are snug here!"

"I don't pretend to be an ascetic," laughed Grantley, as he stretched his legs out on the leg-rest.

"Evidently."

Grantley looked at him, smiling.

"I don't rough it unless I'm obliged. But I can rough it. I once lived for a week on sixpence a day. I had a row with my Governor. He wanted me to give up— Well, never mind details. It's enough to observe, Jeremy, that he was quite right and I was quite wrong. I know that now, and I rather fancy I knew it then. However, his way of putting it offended me, and I flung myself out of the house with three-and-six in my pocket. Like the man in Scripture, I couldn't work and I wouldn't beg, and I wouldn't go back to the Governor. So it was sixpence a day for a week and very airy lodgings. Then it was going to be the recruiting sergeant; but, as luck would have it, I met the dear old man on the way. I suppose I looked a scarecrow; anyhow he was broken up about it, and killed the fatted calf—killed it for an unrepentant prodigal. And I could do that again, though I may live in a boudoir."

Jeremy rubbed his hands slowly against one another—a movement common with him when he was thinking.

"I don't tell you that to illustrate my high moral character—as I say, I was all in the wrong—but just to show you that, given the motive——"

"What was the motive?"

"Pride, obstinacy, conceit—anything you like of that kind," smiled Grantley. "I'd told the fellows about my row, and they'd said I should have to knuckle down. So I made up my mind I wouldn't."

"Because of what they'd say?"

"Don't be inquisitorial, Jeremy. The case is, I repeat, not given as an example of morality, but as an example of me—quite different things. However, I don't want to talk about myself to-night; I want to talk about you. What are you going to do with yourself?"

"Oh, I'm all right!" declared Jeremy. "I've got my London B. A. (It didn't run to Cambridge, you know), and I'm pegging away." A touch of boyish pompousness crept in. "I haven't settled precisely what line of study I shall devote myself to, but I intend to take up and pursue some branch of original research."

Grantley's mind had been set on pleasing Sibylla by smoothing her brother's path. His business interest would enable him to procure a good opening for Jeremy—an opening which would lead to comfort, if not to wealth, in a short time, proper advantage being taken of it.

"Original research?" He smiled indulgently. "There's not much money in that."

"Oh, I've got enough to live on. Sibylla's all right now, and I've got a hundred a year. And I do a popular scientific article now and then—I've had one or two accepted. Beastly rot they have to be, though."

Grantley suggested the alternative plan. Jeremy would have none of it. He turned Grantley's story against him.

"If you could live on sixpence a day out of pride, I can live on what I've got for the sake of—of—" He sought words for his big vague ambitions. "Of knowledge—and—and——"

"Fame?" smiled Grantley.

"If you like," Jeremy admitted with shy sulkiness.

"It'll take a long time. Oh, I know you're not a marrying man; but still, a hundred a year——"

"I can wait for what I want."

"Well, if you change your mind, let me know."

"You didn't let your father know."

Grantley laughed.

"Oh, well, a week isn't ten years, nor even five," he reminded Jeremy.

"A man can wait for what he wants. Hang it, even a woman can do that! Look at Mumples!"

Grantley asked explanations and drew out the story which Mrs. Mumple had told earlier in the evening. Grantley's fancy was caught by it, and he pressed Jeremy for a full and accurate rendering, obtaining a clear view of how Mrs. Mumple herself read the case.

"Quit a romantic picture! The lady and the lover, with the lady outside the castle and the lover inside—just for a change."

Jeremy had been moved by the story, but reluctantly and to his own shame. Now he hesitated whether to laugh or not, nature urging one way, his pose (which he dignified with the title of reason) suggesting the other.

"A different view is possible to the worldly mind," Grantley went on in lazy amusement. "Perhaps the visits bored him. Mumples—if I may presume to call her that—probably cried over him and 'carried on,' as they say. He felt a fool before the warder, depend upon it! And perhaps she didn't look her best in tears—they generally don't. Besides we see what Mumples looks like now, and even ten years ago!—Well, as each three months, or whatever the time may be, rolled round, less of the charm of youth would hang about her. We shouldn't suggest any of this to Mumples, but as philosophers and men of the world we're bound to contemplate it ourselves, Jeremy."

He drank some brandy and soda and lit a fresh cigar. Jeremy laughed applause. Here, doubtless, was the man of the world's view, the rational and unsentimental view to which he was avowed and committed. Deep in his heart a small voice whispered that it was a shame to turn the light of this disillusioned levity on poor old Mumples' mighty sorrow and trustful love.

"And when we're in love with them they can't do anything wrong; and when we've stopped being in love, they can't do anything right," Grantley sighed humorously. "Oh, yes, there's another interpretation of Mr. Mumple's remarkable conduct! You see, we know he's not by nature a patient man, or he wouldn't have committed the indiscretion that brought him where he is. Don't they have bars or a grating, or something between them at these painful interviews? Possibly it was just as well for Mumple's sake, now and then!"

Despite the small voice Jeremy laughed more. He braved its accusation of treachery to Mumple. He tried to feel quite easy in his mirth, to enjoy the droll turning upside down of the pathetic little story as pleasantly and coolly as Grantley there on his couch, with his cigar and his brandy and soda. For Grantley's reflective smile was entirely devoid of any self-questioning or of any sense of treachery to anybody or to anything with claims to reverence or loyalty. It was for Jeremy, however, the first time he had been asked to turn his theories on to one he loved and to try how his pose worked where a matter came near his heart. His mirth did not achieve spontaneity. But it was Grantley who said at last with a yawn:

"It's a shame to make fun out of the poor old soul; but the idea was irresistible, wasn't it, Jeremy?"

And Jeremy laughed again.

Jeremy said good-night and went down the hill, leaving Grantley to read the letters which the evening post had brought him. There had been one from Tom Courtland. Grantley had opened and glanced at that before his guest went away. There were new troubles, it appeared. The Lady Harriet had not given her husband a cordial or even a civil welcome; and the letter hinted that Courtland had stood as much as he could bear and that something, even though it were something desperate, must be done. "A man must find some peace and some pleasure in his life," was the sentence Grantley chose to read out as a sample of the letter; and he had added: "Poor old Tom! I'm afraid he's going to make a fool of himself."

Jeremy had asked no questions as to the probable nature of Courtland's folly (which was not perhaps hard to guess); but the thought of him mingled with the other recollections of the evening, with Mrs. Mumple's story and the turn they had given to it, with Grantley's anecdote about himself, and with the idea of him which Jeremy's acute though raw mind set itself to grope after and to realize. The young man again felt that somehow his theories had begun to be no longer theories in a vacuum of merely speculative thought; they had begun to meet people and to run up against facts. The facts and the people no doubt fitted and justified the theories, but to see how that came about needed some consideration. So far he had got. He had not yet arrived at a modification of the theories, or even at an attitude of readiness to modify them, although that would have been an unimpeachable position from a scientific standpoint.

The sight of Sibylla standing at the gate of their little garden brought his thoughts back to her. He remembered that she had promised to sit up—an irrational proceeding, as her inability to give good ground for it had clearly proved; and it was nearly twelve—a very late hour for Milldean—so well had Grantley's talk beguiled the time. Sibylla herself seemed to feel the need of excuse, for as soon as she caught sight of her brother she cried out to him:

"I simply couldn't go to bed! I've had such a day, Jeremy, and my head's all full of it. And on the top of it came what poor Mumples told us; and—and you can guess how that chimed in with what I must be thinking."

He had come up to her, and she put her hand in his.

"Dear old Jeremy, what friends we've been! We have loved one another, haven't we? Don't stop loving me. You don't say much, and you pretend to be rather scornful—just like a boy; and you try to make out that it's all rather a small and ordinary affair——"

"Isn't it?"

"Oh, I daresay. But to me? Dear, you know what it is to me. I don't want you to say much; I don't mind your pretending. But just now, in the dark, when we're all alone, when nobody can possibly hear—and I swear I won't tell a single soul—kiss me and tell me your heart's with me, because we've been true friends and comrades, haven't we?"

It was dark and nobody was there. Jeremy kissed her and mumbled some awkward words. They were enough.

"Now I'm quite happy. It was just that I wanted to hear it from you too."

Jeremy was glad, but he felt himself compromised. When they went in, his first concern was to banish emotion and relieve the tension. Mrs. Mumple's workbox gave a direction to his impulse. If a young man be inclined, as some are, to assume a cynical and worldly attitude, he will do it most before women, and, of all women, most before those who know him best and have known him from his tender age, since to them above all it is most important to mark the change which has occurred. So Jeremy not only allowed himself to forget that small voice, and, turning back to Mrs. Mumple's story, once more to expose it to an interpretation of the worldly

"I KNOW YOU, I KNOW YOU TOO WELL, YOU—YOU LIAR!"