

anything unless it pleased her to do it. And yet she said "must."

"It's not silly," she said, seriously. Her mood had changed again. She was seldom serious.

"It is excellent," she continued, slowly. "I must be able to do something for myself. Some day I shall be alone, dependent upon myself. I am preparing now."

I could not understand this Diana. She was different from any of her score of other selves. The idea of her being alone in the world appeared amusing. I smiled indulgently. She resented my levity.

"You men may laugh," she said, "because you can face the world alone and gain a livelihood in a thousand ways. But a woman——."

She faltered, and there was a suspicious lustre in her eyes.

The mere suggestion of tears—of Diana in tears—was heartrending. I loved her so dearly. Her wound was my wound also.

"How queerly you talk," I said, tenderly. "One would think you were a homeless, friendless orphan."

"Who knows?" she replied. "Stranger things have happened."

"Unless——" I cried. And then I stopped short. My air-castles came down with a crash. I remembered that I was poor.

Diana was leaning forward, her chin in her hands, her elbows on the table, her lips parted expectantly. And in her eyes a light—what else could it be? Surely nothing but love could kindle such a fire——.

Ah, but I was poor.

"Unless?" interrogated Diana, her eyes still on my face.

The temptation was strong. But I kept back the torrent of words that sprang to my lips.

"Unless someone—a man with money and a heart full of love for you—comes and carries you away," I finished with simulated enthusiasm.

She sat quite still for a moment, her deep eyes reading my