

is back again! He must have been looking for some one."

Nance rose from the quiet corner in which they were sitting, and stepped forward to greet Gore; but, as he came towards her down the flight of shallow steps, her smile of welcome died, and a look of surprise and concern crossed her eyes.

"Walter," she said softly.

He looked round at sound of his name.

"Oh! Nance!" he said. His manner was as quiet as usual, but he looked like a man who has undergone some great fatigue and has not yet found time to rest.

They shook hands in silence, Nance's dark blue eyes scanning his face.

"Have you heard from Clo?" she said, at last. "I have. Such a dear letter—written in the train."

He flushed.

"Yes," he said laconically, "I have heard. But I can't wait to talk about the letter now. I only came here hoping to find a man I know; they told me at his rooms that he was dining here, but 'twas evidently a mistake. I must say good-night!"

He held out his hand, and Nance took it mechanically; but as their fingers fell apart, she stepped forward and walked with him resolutely across the lounge.

In the vestibule she paused, and compelled him to meet her eyes.

"Walter," she said, "something is wrong!"

Gore's face hardened.

"Nothing is wrong."

She tightened her fingers round the fan she was carrying.

"That is untrue, Walter."

Something in the entire candour of the words touched him. He looked at her with new eyes.

"You are right," he said quietly. "It was untrue."

"Then something has happened? Something about Clo?"

"Yes. Something—something that will break our engagement."

Nance turned very pale.

"Walter!" she said faintly, after a moment's pause. Then, before he could speak again, she looked up at him.