

To my astonishment the Princess rose too and the expression on her face seemed to have undergone somewhat of a change.

"Do you think I might come too?" she asked. "I should like to know that man and his wife. Would she mind? Should I be intruding? Does she ever receive visitors?"

I said I was certain she would be only too delighted if the Princess would honour her with a visit; that it would be a great kindness to both of them; that I should be only too happy to present my bedridden friend to her. You know the sort of thing one would say.

"Don't make mention of my title," she said. "I think I would rather you called me plain *Madame* if you don't mind. You can say a friend of yours, can't you?"

I said that I could, that I was entirely at her command in this or any other particular.

Together we wound our way across the stone terraces, through the vines and the creepers in the direction of the gable-roofed house.

My friend in the window saw us coming and waved a frantic welcome.

"I am bringing you a visitor," I called out, and he instantly drew in his head. Even bedridden people don't always care about being taken *à l'improviste*.

Fortunately the game was a very exciting one and