

"Yes. I'll ask Harry. If it is like to-day—it'll be lovely."

"Better than to-day, I hope," he muttered, wondering very much if he could wait till then, and cursing the wire entanglements of convention.

"I'm going to see you home," he announced as he handed her out of the boat, and repeated his intention when all the party was ashore. "Good night, Mums," he added, laying a hand on his mother's shoulder. "Lenox is coming along with me. Leave things open for us, will you?"

"Very well, dear; don't be too late," she said, looking up at him; but between the gathering dusk and his own preoccupation he missed the mute appeal of her eyes.

During the short walk back to the village, Miss O'Neill took complete command of affairs. Having at last recovered her treasure, she slipped a retaining hand through Bel's arm, and never a chance had Mark of another intimate word.

She graciously fell in with the morrow's plan, however; and afterwards, as the men strolled back, smoking, to Inverraig, Maurice was frankly informed what would be expected of him on the occasion. Mark betrayed his repressed excitability by speaking rather more rapidly and abruptly than usual.

"I'm running this show altogether—you understand? We're not going off on a blooming picnic to play consequences. No nonsense, mind. And no Harry Lauder—confound you! All you and Miss O'Neill are required to do is to make yourselves scarce. Fact is, you're only there because I couldn't get—Miss Alison to come alone."

Maurice smiled broadly. "I gathered as much. But I say, Forsyth," he hesitated and took a pull at his pipe, "do you really mean business?"

"Rather so. What kind of a cad d'you take me for?" snapped Mark, whose temper was quick at