

"Don't act as if you didn't know me," she said.

"Certainly I know you," he replied.

He turned to Trask.

"We must be in our seats at two-thirty The Premier speaks at three "

There was an awkward pause, broken by the announcement—

"The Duchess of Wrowe."

"The Devil!" ejaculated Lady Bobs audibly, whereupon Kendrick flashed a smile of amusement at her.

The frumpy well known figure puffed toward them.

"Roberta, I've come to lunch. I'm not invited, but I've come."

"How enchanting of you, Duchess," said Bobs.

"Ashton, you ask me to parties that bore me, and when you give one that interests me, I have to come unasked."

He bowed over her hand.

"Unasked, possibly. Never unwelcome."

She nodded to the others.

"Duchess, if you weren't asked, you will have to do without your entree. As the youngest present I refuse to give up mine to you.