

"Is Alice really ill?" she asked.

"She *will* be if my orders are not attended to."

"But I am a great deal with her! I have lived at Glebe Royal ever since my brother's marriage twenty years ago. I always meet my sister-in-law at meals."

"That is not sufficient, and excuse me for saying I want a younger and more congenial companion for Lady Chichester than yourself, someone who will be always with her, to sing or play and suggest means of amusement, who will let her have her own way, in fact, and not argue with or contradict her."

Miss Chichester tossed her head.

"And pray where will you find this *rara avis*? They don't grow in Glebe Royal."

"We must advertise for one."

"You mean to engage a hired companion for Lady Chichester. I won't allow it."

"Then I must speak to Sir Alan myself on the subject. I thought you might have paved the way for me, but it is no matter. I shall call in again shortly. Good-evening."

And, without offering to shake hands with her, Dr. Jolliffe passed through the drive gates and left Miss Chichester alone. It was very dark and very damp as she stood there for a few minutes looking after his retreating figure, and almost wishing she had not spoken so hastily. But the proposal had annoyed her. They were very conservative at Glebe Royal, and the idea of a stranger being admitted to the family circle, to hear all their secrets and be a constant spy upon their actions, was very distasteful to her. Added to which her pride was hurt at the idea