

Allardyce took the shallow steps in a few bounds, and his knock at the door had all a lover's impatience in it. Frances opened the door to him, and bade him come in, very quietly, and in the little sitting-room they regarded each other in absolute silence for a moment.

"Well, I've obeyed you," he said, and she saw the hunger in his eyes. "I've stopped away twelve months to the very day."

"I thought it was longer," she said, whimsically, and her voice was very low.

"What have you to say to me now?" he asked, anxiously, but with a note of triumph in his voice, for her face and her eyes answered him. It was lovely with that look of tenderness which he alone had power to call forth.

"Are you of the same mind still?" she asked.

"If I wasn't, I wouldn't be here, on a Sunday, too; but I had to come on the very day. Perhaps you've changed your mind?"

"Perhaps I have. Does your mother know you have come?"

"Yes, her letter is in my pocket; but I didn't come to talk about her, but to ask when you are coming to Castlebar."

"Are you sure you've thought of everything, counted the cost? I've sometimes called myself one of the emancipated. Are you prepared to have an emancipated wife?"

"I don't care what she is as long as she is you, Frances."

"All right," she said, soberly; but there was that in her eyes which made him glad. "You take the risks, and I'll come."

Eleanor Kerr, sitting idly by the drawing-room window, saw the Castlebar phaeton coming up the avenue, being driven in a leisurely manner by Mrs. Allardyce, attired in the usual poke bonnet and capacious driving cloak. Fashions might come and fashions might go,