

"I am so glad to see you," she said simply.

"I ~~don't know~~ what impelled me to come this afternoon. I never thought that I should have this happiness." Then, in a lower tone, "You don't mind my being here? You don't want me to go away?"

"No, no, why should I? It does not matter—here."

They had not seen each other at all for weeks, and had met only two or three times, and then for a few minutes only, since Alan left Bute Lodge in December. They corresponded freely and frankly, but Lettice had decreed, in spite of some murmurs from Alan, that they should not meet. Scandal had been busy with her name, and, until Alan obtained his divorce, it seemed better to her to live a very retired life, seeing almost nobody, and especially guarding herself against accusations of any close association with Alan Walcott.

"I had just posted a letter to you before I came out," he said. They were at the end of the last row of seats and could talk, before the music began, without any fear of being overheard. "It is as I expected, Lettice. There are great difficulties in our way."

She looked an interrogation.

"The length of time that has elapsed is an obstacle. We cannot find any proof of worse things than drunkenness and brawling during the last year or two. And of the events before that time, when I know that she was untrue to me, we scarcely see how to obtain absolute proof. You must forgive me for mentioning these things to you, but I am obliged."

"Yes, and there is no reason why you should not tell me everything," she said, turning her quiet eyes upon him with a look of such perfect trust that the tumult in Alan's mind was suddenly stilled. "But you knew that there would be difficulties. Is there anything else?"

"I hardly know how to tell you. She has done what I half expected her to do—she has brought a counter charge against me—against——"

"Ah, I understand. All the more reason, Alan, why we should fight it out."

"My love," he said, in the lowest possible tone that could reach her ears, "if you knew how it grieves me that you should suffer!"