

"It's a mile through the park. We go in at this private wicket. But, Cyril, in the name of goodness, what do you mean?"

"I've just seen that Dick Bygrave is the Labour candidate. I'm not fighting him, thank you, Clare."

"Dick Bygrave!" she echoed in tones of ineffable scorn. "You would let a trifle like that stand in your way!"

"Bygrave is hardly a trifle, but we're not going to discuss it, Clare," he said, and his face hardened into an obstinacy she had never before seen in it.

It made him look very like his mother, and a sort of chill seemed to creep over her.

"But, Cyril," she cried in a low, tense voice which indicated the depth of her displeasure, "you must be mad! You can't play fast and loose with people like that. Nobody does."

"Can't I? It's open to any man to change his mind. I've got mine made up as to what I'm going to say. I'll put it on to the three-cornered contest. It's no use talking, Clare. Understand that I won't fight Bygrave. I won't, I tell you, nor come within sight or hearing of him in my life again, if I can avoid it. Now let's talk about something else."

"If you go up with that cock-and-bull story to your mother, it's all up with us," she said angrily.

"I don't think so. My mother will understand. She knew the Bygraves. She would see the indecency of it quickly enough. I think I'll take a trip to Australia and see what the little chap's about, Clare. Things haven't turned out as I expected."

She knew perfectly well what he meant, because she had made no effort either to give him a home or affection or anything to which a man is entitled in married life. She had, indeed, very soon after their marriage permitted him to see that her motive had been an entirely selfish