

trouble alone, when the door was suddenly opened and he entered. She sprang up with an almost hysterical exclamation of surprise. The shock of discovery and the inevitable strain of the past week had told upon Lady Lyndon's hitherto iron nerves. She would start at the slightest sound, and lived in a state of hourly dread lest the public exposure which she dreaded should come upon her. The absolute quiet of the past week had been more trying to her than if she had been called upon to fight in open court. Apparently neither Fletcher nor those representing him had taken any action as yet, not even a communication had passed between the lawyers, and it seemed to Emily Lyndon that the last stage of her endurance was reached, and that unless something happened soon she must do something desperate.

"At last," she called out, shrilly, and without greeting of any kind. "I wonder you dare show face after your treatment of me. Surely I am entitled to be told at once where you have been, and why you have not even sent me a line?"

"All right, mother. Sit down, and I'll tell you all about it, presently," said Lyndon, struck by the ravages which that week of anxiety and suspense had wrought on his mother's beautiful face. "I thought the best thing I could do in the circumstances was to clear out, so I cleared. I didn't know what to expect when I came back. I have thought I would find Fletcher installed here in state. Has nothing been done?"

"Nothing," she snapped, angrily. "You ought to have been at home looking after your own interests, and until you explain your absence I will tell you nothing. You must understand that I am not a child to be treated with whatever rudeness you please."