

"Of course. How could I believe anything else?"

The man's face changed again, and once more she read the signs. Whatever doubts and half-formed resolutions — and she had some idea of them — had been working in his mind were dissipating.

"Well," he continued, "I've sacrificed the best half of my possessions and have destroyed the confidence of the people who, to serve their ends, would have helped me on. Isn't that a serious thing?"

"No; it's really a most unimportant one. I"—the slight pause gave the assertion force—"really mean it."

Vane partly raised himself with one arm and there was no doubting the significance of his intent gaze.

"I believe I made another blunder — in England. I should have had more courage and have faced the risk. But you might have turned against me then."

"I don't think that's likely," Evelyn murmured, lowering her eyes.

The man leaned forward eagerly, but the hand he stretched out fell short, and the trivial fact once more roused her compassion for his helplessness.

"You can mean only one thing!" he cried. "You wouldn't be afraid to face the future with me now?"

"I wouldn't be afraid at all."

A half-hour later Mrs. Nairn tapped at the door and smiled rather broadly when she came in. Then she shook her head reproachfully.

"Ye would have been asleep a while since," she scolded Vane, and then turned to Evelyn. "Is this the way ye intend to look after him?"

She waved the girl toward the door and when she joined her in the passage she kissed her effusively.