

tance I covered. It was close upon four o'clock when I returned, and the Duchess met me in the hall.

"My dear Frank, don't apologise. You are an eccentric person, so it would not have surprised me if you had altogether forgotten that I was coming."

"But —"

"Oh, yes, it pleased me to come by an earlier train," she laughed, "that is a detail."

"The motor was not at the station."

"Of course not. I drove up in a most disreputable cab."

"You could have wired."

"I could, but I thought it might amuse you to see me in that cab, and after all you missed the excitement. You will have a little more of me than you expected to-day. May I tell them to bring tea into the library?"

"Do."

"Go and pick out two of the cosiest chairs; I will follow you. I am going to send a message to your housekeeper and ask her for some special hot cakes I am particularly fond of. Do you mind?"

"Give any orders you like," and I laughed as I went to the library. The Duchess had done me good already.

There was a fire in the library, for the evenings were still chilly. The light of it was dancing in the room. I entered quickly, then stood still upon the threshold, then closed the door gently. I thought I was dreaming. Someone had risen quickly from a low chair. The fire-light fell upon a woman in gray.

"The Duchess brought me," she said.