

were falling off her shoulders, she hurried upstairs. There followed a thin girl with dark hair piled above dark eyes.

"Lydia is in the drawing-room," said Susy, with dramatic depth of voice; and the two disappeared.

When he entered, Lydia was standing by the fire. The light of some blazing wood, and of one small lamp, filled the pretty room with colour and soft shadows. Among them, the slender form in its black dress, the fair head thrown back, the outstretched hands were of a loveliness that arrested him — almost unmanned him.

She came forward.

"You've been so long coming!"

The intonation of the words expressed the yearning of many days and nights. They were not a reproach; rather, an exquisite revelation.

He took her hands, and slowly, irresistibly he drew her; and she came to him. He bowed his face upon hers, and the world stood still! Through the emotion of that supreme moment, with its mingled cup of joy and remembered bitterness there ran for him a touch of triumph natural to his temperament. She had asked no promise from him; reminded him of no condition; made no reservation. There she was upon his breast. The male pride in him was appeased. Self-respect seemed once more possible.

Hand in hand, they sat down together by the fire. He gave her an account of the double inquest, and the result.

"When we came out," he added, calmly, "there were not quite so many ready to lynch me as before."

Her hand trembled in his. The horror of his experience,