

cess, and smiled her welcome. Lady Trask's smile was famous.

Sir Ashton held a hand to her, and she laid her own in it, but her thoughts were not with him, she was intent on something else.

"Why didn't you bring him with you?" she asked.

"He was busy at the War Office when I left. He is coming along presently."

"He may change his mind——"

"Oh no. I hope you haven't asked people to lunch," he added with quick suspicion.

"One or two."

"Roberta, not a party!"

"No. Cecily, Mildred Downer, Ted and Larry. That's all."

"He certainly would bolt it, if he thought it was a party. He hates them, you know."

"The man is the supreme egotist of the world!" smiled Lady Bobs, as she was known to her familiars. "You would think he conferred eternal distinction upon us, and our house forever, by breaking bread with us."

"I merely asked him to drop in for lunch."

"Stop bothering. If he objects to some amusing women and two nice men, he can depart."