

"Please say that I shall be delighted if she will dine with me," said Mrs. Cheston.

The coming of the servants was the signal for Helen Ambrose to take her departure. As they were alone they said very little more, but their hands clung together and once again they kissed.

"Remember I am here—always here," said Olivia Mary. "Call on me for anything that I can do."

Helen Ambrose walked back to Garth Court very slowly, indeed it was with an effort that she walked at all. The information she had just been given seemed to have taken from her not only her physical strength, but that pride and buoyant spirit which was so valuable in her present life.

There was more to her than definite alarm in the thought of Silvia and what she was doing, there was that sense of personal failure which was so mortifying. Supposing she had not heard this, supposing by chance she had not gone to Thorpe this afternoon, things might have drifted on and then Nigel might so naturally have reproached her. He had married her to be a mother to his children, to work with him, to protect his treasures. Would she not have merited his bitterest reproaches if she had let the greatest of these treasures be stolen from him?

She felt so tired in heart and mind that she was almost unequal to facing the immediate future. Olivia Mary had called her a woman of resource, and so she was, so she had proved herself many and many a time in the past; but then in the old days she had never been called upon to handle a problem at once so delicate and so pregnant with danger. Still, as she drew nearer