

nobleman and landowner in the county. If only it had been the other scheme which had miscarried!

His avenue of elms was sheltering now an orchestra of singing birds. With the slightly moving breeze which had sprung up since sunset, the perfume of his roses became alluringly manifest. Through the trees he heard the chiming of the great stable clock from Mandeleys, and the sound seemed somehow to torture him. His head drooped for a moment upon his arms.

The room seemed suddenly to become darker. He raised his head and remained staring, like a man who looks upon some impossible vision. Lady Letitia, bare-headed, a little paler than usual, a little, it seemed to him, more human, was standing there, looking in upon him. He managed to rise to his feet, but he had no words.

"I am not a ghost," she said. "Please come out into the garden. I want to talk to you."

He followed her without a word. It was significant that his first impulse had been to shrink away from her as one dreading to receive a hurt. She seemed to notice it and smiled.

"Let us try and be reasonable for a short time," she continued. "We seem to have been living in some perfectly absurd nightmare for the last few hours. I have come to you to try and regain my poise. Yes, we will sit down — here, please."

They sat in the same chairs which they had occupied on her previous visit. David had been through many crises in his life, but this one left him with no command of coherent speech — left him curiously, idiotically tongue-tied.

"I have thought over this ridiculous affair," she went on. "I must talk about it to some one, and there is only you left."