

For a minute silence fell—each occupied in delicious reverie. Suddenly Germaine spoke.

"The marriage service won't matter a bit now," she remarked, with exultation. Her betrothed positively jumped.

"What did you say?" he demanded, after a stupefied pause. "Are you proposing to dispense——"

"Oh, Miles, you *must* know what I mean! Don't pretend to be stupid! When Mamma was being married don't you remember how you turned and looked at me?"

"Ah!" Enlightenment dawned upon him. "I require and charge you both," he murmured.

"You said to me then, as plainly as anyone can without speaking, '*Don't you see that there is only one way out of this?*'"

"I am glad you understood so well."

"I did, but of course I wouldn't," was her reply, perfectly satisfactory to him, though somewhat elliptical.

Their eyes met in a smile of content.

Miles sat, his arm along the back of the couch behind Germaine's head, watching the light of the leaping flames play upon her face. Outside, the rain dashed against the panes, and the sou-wester went howling over Devon. Marquis gave a long sigh of utter well-being, dropping his head upon his paws; and the squire thought of that evening so recent, yet so far away, in which he had dreaded the thought of his own fireside, and had entered to find her sitting by it.

It seemed to him that a man whose empty house had suddenly become a home, could have nothing left to wish for.

Dannie, knitting by the breakfast-room fire, wondered that Germaine took so long over her letters.