

**A LONDON
SEASON. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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A London Season. In Three Volumes, Vol. II by Annie Thomas

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ANNIE THOMAS

**A LONDON
SEASON. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

A LONDON SEASON.

By ANNIE THOMAS,

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AUTHOR OF "DENNIS DOWNE," "SIR VICTOR'S CHOICE,"
"STRAY SHEEP," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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A GOOD SETTLEMENT.

CHAPTER IV.

WORTHY OF MISS LUTTREL.

A WOMAN'S voice—distinctly a woman's voice was making itself heard in that library which Stephen Malling had insisted on keeping sacred to himself, even from his own wife, at this weird uncanny hour between midnight and the dawn of another day. The influence of the time was upon me, thrilling me with the indefinable terror of the indefinite, to which the bravest and rashest of us are prone. It came upon me suddenly to remember that I was that most wretched of all things, an amateur detective

—a mere spy in this Mr. Malling's household! What if I were discovered, and brought up before a local magistrate for punishment? I—a Miss Luttrell! My brain reeled as I contemplated the possibility.

My brain reeled and my teeth chattered, but happily both brain and teeth performed their work inaudibly. Not a sign from the interior of the library was made that could lead me to suppose a sound from the hall—from *me* in fact—had penetrated into it. Indeed, the stillness grew and grew till it became oppressive. At the risk of my life and reputation, of Harty's safety and happiness, of everything I held dearest, in fact, I gently turned the handle and opened the door.

The room was empty!

For a moment or two I thought I must

be the victim of madness or sorcery. At the expiration of that time I recalled my scattered senses and brought them to bear upon the scene before me. The room was empty, but a door was open in the wall opposite—the wall that had presented nothing but closely-packed rows of well-bound books to my vision on the occasion of my former visit.

With the dexterity of a cat I crossed the room noiselessly, and looked through that open doorway. The lamp from the library mantelpiece showed me a dark passage only. But that dark passage led to some place which I would discover and explore before Mr. Malling was many hours older. All that I could do that night was to make a note of the volumes through which the door opened, and effect my escape with silence and celerity before Mr. Malling returned.