

# Another Woman's Territory.

By ALIEN

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## CHAPTER XIV.

GERALDINE.

ERALDINE WARD sat in her drawing-room at her hotel that afternoon in a curious frame of mind. The satisfaction which the artist feels when conscious of good work, had been her's all the morning, and had contented her.

She was honest to herself at all times; always she wrested from the situation something that belonged specially to her own individuality, and had nothing to do with her position or reputation.

To the crowd she was a queen, and dispensed her smiles impartially, whatever impatience or weariness she might feel. But if any fell into the mistake of confusing the actress with the woman, the mistake was fatal. She reserved for herself within her dominion a small place set apart where she held sacred court with her womanhood. No dominion, in her opinion, was too wide for the artist, no boundary, too exclusive for the woman. Of course she had made bitter enemies; equally of course, ardent friends, but of enemies or friends alike she was independent, for she had never been poor.

Her art had been her one passion; its tyrannies, its limitations, its perceptions, despairs and triumphs had been her only thralldom; the only master she had known. To her art she had knelt humbly subject to the brutalities and caresses from this hand, but any other passion had lain passive. Howard Grey had just appealed to her through her artistic sense. Her meeting with him had been a unique experience to her, as the supposed sawmiller of an out-

of-the-world mill; his personality had interested her, and he was the only man who had known her in intimate converse apart from any social or artistic distinction whatever.

The room in which she sat had been subjugated—as every room she inhabited—to her taste and personality. The friends who had smiled on her from the walls of "The Whare" were around her here. The subdued lights, the rose tints and a profusion of flowers robbed the hotel room of its luxurious crudeness. Every tint and rarity of Australian autumn blossom, from hot-house and winter garden, decorated and perfumed the room. But there were no briar roses, neither blue irises, called "flags," in Polly's garden at Pine Mill.

Geraldine, in a tea-gown of soft billowy black, looked almost fragile. Her fairness of skin and the willowy grace of her figure gave a girlishness to her appearance, which the sadness of her mouth and the expression of her dark eyes corrected. She belonged to that rare type of women who subordinate their clothes to their personality. Few could tell what she wore, only how she looked.

In the drowsy quiet of the afternoon the acclaim of last night, the congratulations of the morning were not so real to her as the recollection of that afternoon at Matamata when Howard had declared geniuses were better at a distance. Evidently that was his honest conviction.

The dreamy softness of her eyes, the half smile of her lips testified to pleasant reverie; in memory she walked once more over the downs of Matamata in Howard Grey's