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TRISTRAM of BLENT

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A MAN OF MARK MR WITT'S WIDOW FATHER STAFFORD
A CHANGE OF AIR
HALF A HERO
THE PRISONER OF ZENDA
THE GOOD IN THE CAR
THE DOLLY DIALOGUES
COMEDIES OF COUNTSHIP
THE CHRONICLES OF COUNT ANTONIO
THE HEART OF PRINCESS OSRA
PHROSO
SIMON DALE
RUPERT OF HENTIZAU
THE KING'S MIRROR
OU SANITE

TRISTRAM of BLENT

An Episode in the Story of an Ancient House

Ву

ANTHONY HOPE

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A Suppressed Passage

MR JENKINSON NEELD WAS AN ELDERLY MAN OF COMPORTABLE PRIVATE means; he had chambers in Pall Mall, close to the Imperium Club, and HIS SHORT STOUTISH FIGURE, TOPHED BY A CHUBBY SPECTACLED FACE, MIGHT BE SEEN BYTERING THAT DIGNIFIED ESTABLISHMENT EVERY DAY AT LUNCH TIME, AND ALSO AT THE HOUR OF DINNER ON THE EVENINGS WHEN HE HAD NO INVITATION ELSEWHERE. HE HAD ONCE PRACTISED AT THE BAR, AND LIKED TO explain that he had deserted his profession for the pursuit of literature. HE DID NOT, HOMEVER, WRITE ON HS OWN ACCOUNT; HE EDITED. HE WOULD EDT ANYTHING PROVIDED THERE WAS NO GREAT PUBLIC DEMAND FOR AN

EDITION OF IT. REGARDLESS OF PRESENT FAVOR, HE APPEALED TO POSTERITY—
AS GENTLEMEN WITH PRIVATE MEANS ARE QUITE ENTITLED TO DO. PERHAPS HE
MADE RATHER HIGH DEMANDS ON POSTERITY; BUT THAT WAS HIS BUSINESS—
AND ITS. AT ANY RATE HIS TASTE WAS CURIOUS AND HIS CONSORINCE ACUTE.
HE WAS VERY MINUTE AND VERY SCRUPULOUS, VERY PAINSTAKING AND VERY
DISCREET, IN THE EXERCISE OF HIS DUTIES. POSTERITY MAY PERHAPS LIKE
THESE QUALITIES IN AN EDITIOR OF MEMORIS AND DIARIES; FOR SUCH WERE MR
NIEHD'S FAVORITE SUBJECTS. SOMETIMES HE FIELL NITTO A SORE STRUGGLE

BETWEEN CURIOSITY AND DISCRETION, HAVING IMPULSES IN HIMSELF WHICH HE forbore to attribute to posterity.

He was in just such a fix now—so he thought to himself—as he ferused the manuscript before him. It was the Journal of his deceased friend Josiah Cholderton, sometime Member of Parliament

(IN THE LIBERAL INTEREST) FOR THE BOROUGH OF BAXTON IN YORKSHIRE, COMMERCIAL DELEGATE TO THE CONGRESS OF MUNICH IN '64, AND INVENTOR

OF THE HYGROXERIC METHOD OF DIRESSING WOOD. NO WONDER POSTERITY WAS TO BE INTERESTED IN CHOLDERTON! YET AT TIMES—AND ESPECIALLY DURING HIS VISITS TO THE CONTINENT—THE DIARIST INDILLOPD HIMSELE IN DICRESSIONS. ABOUT PEOPLE HE ENCOUNTERED: AND THESE ASSUMED NOW AND THEN A CHARACTER SO PERSONAL. OR DIVULGED EPISODES SO PRIVATE. THAT THE EDITOR HAD RECOURSE TO HIS BLUE PENCIL AND DREW IT WITH A SIGH THROUGH PAGES WHICH HE HAD HIMSELE FOUND NO SWALL BELIEF FROM THE SEVERER RECORD OF CHOLDERTON'S SERVICES TO THE COMMERCE OF HIS COLINTRY. MR NEED SAT NOW WITH BLUE PENCIL JUDICIALLY POISED, CONSIDERING THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE IN HIS FRIEND'S RECOLLECTIONS. THE ENTRY BORE DATE HEIDELBERG. 1875. "AT THE WIDOWS" (MR CHOLDERTON IS SPEAKING OF A CERTAIN MADAME DE KRIES) "PLEASANT VILLA I BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH A LADY WHO MADE SOMETHING OF A SENSATION IN HER DAY, AND WHOM I REMEMBER BOTH FOR HER OWN SAKE AND BECAUSE OF A CURIOUS OCCURRENCE CONNECTED WITH HER. A YEAR AND A HALF BEFORE (OR THEREABOUTS) SOCIETY HAD BEEN STARTLED BY THE ELOPEMENT OF MISS. T. WITH SIR R. E. THEY WERE MARRIED. WENT TO FRANCE. AND LIVED TOGETHER A MONTH OR TWO. SUDDENLY SIR R. WENT OFF ALONE, WHOSE THE FAULT WAS NOBODY KNEW, OR AT LEAST IT NEVER CAME TO MY EARS. THE LADY WAS NOT LONG LEFT IN SOLITUDE, AND, WHEN I MET HER, SHE PASSED AS MRS F., WIFE OF CAPTAIN F. THE CAPTAIN SEEMED TO ME AN ORDINARY GOOD-LOOKING RECKLESS YOUNG FELLOW: BUT MRS F. WAS A MORE STRIKING PERSON. SHE WAS TALL, GRACEFUL, AND VERY FAIR, A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (I MIGHT RATHER SAY GIRL) BEYOND QUESTION. TALK REVEALED HER AS AN ABSOLUTE CHILD IN A MORAL SENSE, WITH A CHILD'S

INFINITE CANDOR, A CHILD'S INFINITE DECEIT, A CHILD'S LOVE OF PRAISE, A CHILD'S DEFIANCE OF CENSURE WHERE APPROVAL WOULD BE TOO DEARLY EARNED. SHE WAS HARDLY A REASONABLE BEING. AS WE MEN OF THE WORLD UNDERSTAND THE TERM: SHE WAS HOWEVER AN EXCEEDINGLY ATTRACTIVE OREATURE. THE NATURAL FEELINGS OF A WOMAN, AT LEAST, WERE STRONG IN HER. AND SHE WAS FRETTING OVER THE PROSPECTS OF THE

ANXIETY. I UNDERSTOOD THEIR FEELINGS EVEN MORE FULLY (IN ANY CASE THE SITUATION WAS DISTRESSING) WHEN I LEARNT FROM MADAME DE KRIES THAT IN CERTAIN EVENTS (WHICH HAPPENED LATER) THE LADY AND HER CHILD AFTER HER WOULD BECOME PERSONS OF RANK AND importance. Now comes the scene which has stamped itself on My Memory. I WAS SITTING IN MADAME DE KRIES' PARI OR WITH HER AND HER DAUGHTER -AN ODD DARK LITTLE THING. FIVE OR SIX YEARS OLD. SUDDENLY MRS F.

BABY WHO WAS SOON TO BE BORN TO HER CAPTAIN E. SHARED HER

CAME IN SHE WAS IN A STATE OF AGITATION AND EXCITEMENT BY NO MEANS HEALTHY (I SHOULD SUPPOSE) FOR ONE IN HER CONDITION. SHE HELD A LETTER IN HER HAND AND WAVED IT IN THE AIR, CRYING, 'SIR R.'S DEAD. SIR R.'S DEAD! WE CAN BE MARRIED! OH, WE'RE IN TIME, IN TIME IN TIME! EXTRAORDINARY AS SLICH EXCLAMATIONS MAY APPEAR WHEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND MY OWN PRESENCE ARE CONSIDERED. I HAVE REPEATED THEM Verbatim. THEN SHE SANK DOWN ON THE SOFA. MADAME DE KRIES KNEELING BY HER. WHILE THE IMP (AS I CALLED THE CHLD. WHOM I DISLIKED) STARED AT HER OPEN-EYED. WONDERING NO

DOUBT WHAT THE FUSS WAS ABOUT, DIRECTLY AFTER F. CAME IN, ALMOST AS UPSET AS MRS F., AND THE PAIR BETWEEN THEM MANAGED TO EXPLAIN TO US THAT SHE HAD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM SIR R.'S SERVANT (WITH WHOM SHE HAD APPARENTLY MAINTAINED SOME COMMUNICATION). ANNOUNCING THAT HIS MASTER HAD. AFTER TWO DAYS' ILLNESS. DIED OF HEART COMPLAINT ON THE 6TH JUNE. 'THINK OF THE DIFFERENCE IT. MAKES, THE ENORMOUS DIFFERENCE! SHE GASPED.

JUMPING UP AGAIN AND STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM. SHE WAS SO FULL OF THIS IDEA THAT SHE DID NOT SPARE A THOUGHT TO THE DEAD MAN OR TO ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT STRIKE US AS PECULIAR OR DISTASTEFUL IN HER OWN ATTITUDE AND THE WAY IN WHICH SHE RECEIVED.

THE NEWS. 'WE SHALL BE MARRIED DIRECTLY.' SHE CONTINUED WITH THAT

STRANGE ABSENCE OF SHAME OR PRETENCE WHICH ALWAYS MARKED HER. 'AND THEN IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT. AND NOBODY'LL BE ABLE TO SAY A WORD.

IN THE FUTURE! SHE WENT ON IN THIS STRAIN FOR A LONG WHILE, UNTIL

PROPOSED TO ACCOMPANY HER TO HER OWN HOUSE AT THIS POINT I MADE MY EXCUSES AND RETIRED. THE IMP FOLLOWING ME TO THE DOOR AND ASKING ME AS I WENT OUT, WHY PEOPLE HAD TO BE MARRIED AGAIN WHEN OTHER PEOPLE DIED: SHE WAS A CHILD WHO NEEDED wiser and firmer bringing-up than her mother gave her. I DID NOT MYSELF SEE CAPTAIN AND MRS F. AGAIN AS LLEET

HEDELBERG THE NEXT DAY. 22ND JUNE. I LEARNT HOWEVER FROM

MADAME DE KRIES AT LAST INSISTED ON HER CALMING HERSELF. AND

MADAME DE KRIES THAT THE WEDDING WAS HURRIED ON AND TOOK PLACE ON THE DAY FOLLOWING MY DEPARTURE: AFTER THIS THE PAIR WENT TO BADEN, AND THERE, A FORTNIGHT LATER, THE CHILD-A BOY-WAS BORN I MUST CONFESS THAT I WAS GLAD THE YOUNG COURLE HAD AVOIDED THE CALAMITY THEY WERE IN DREAD OF, ALTHOUGH I AM NOT SURE THAT I HAD A RIGHT TO WISH THAT THEY SHOULD ESCAPE THE FULL consequences of their fault.

MY FEELINGS WERE ABRUPTLY CHANGED WHEN, ON PAYING A FLYING VISIT TO MADAME DE KRIES A FEW MONTHS LATER, I HEARD THE SEQUEL OF THE STORY, TOLD TO ME IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE, AND IN VIOLATION, I FEAR.

OF THE OLD LADY'S PLEDGE OF SECRECY. (SHE WAS A SAD GOSSIP, A FAILING WITH WHICH I HAVE NO SYMPATHY.) SIR R. E. DID NOT. IN FACT. DIE ON THE DATE REPORTED. HE FELL INTO A COLLAPSE. MISTAKEN FOR DEATH BY THOSE ABOUT HIM. AND EVEN BY HIS MEDICAL ATTENDANT: AFTER LYING IN THIS STATE FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS HE REVIVED AND LIVED. NEARLY A WEEK LONGER. A SECOND LETTER. APPRISING MRS F. OF THIS FACT, AND ANNOUNCING THE CORRECT DATE OF HIS DEATH AS JUNE 12TH, REACHED HER AT BADEN ON THE 28TH. BY THIS TIME SHE WAS MARRIED.

BUT THE VALIDITY OF HER NEW UNION (SOLEWNIZED ON THE 23RD) DID NOT APPEAR TO BE AFFECTED. NOTHING MORE WAS DONE, AND THE BOY WAS BORN, AS I HAVE STATED, EARLY IN JULY, ONLY AFTER THIS EVENT, WHICH NATURALLY ENGROSSED THE PARENTS' ATTENTION, DID THE MISTAKE INTO

WHICH THEY HAD FALLEN COME TO BE DISCOVERED. AS A MATTER OF FORM, AND TO AVOID DOUBTS IN THE FUTURE. CAPTAIN F. WROTE FOR THE OFFICIAL CERTIFICATE OF SIR R'S DEATH, WHEN IT CAME IT CAME AS A THUNDERBOLT SIR R HAD BEEN RESIDING IN A SMALL RUSSIAN TOWN NEAR THE FRONTIER: HE WAS INTERESTED. I UNDERSTOOD. IN SOME BUSINESS THERE. THE SERVANT TO WHOM I HAVE REFERRED WAS AN UNEDUCATED MAN AND COULD NOT WRITE: HE HAD PICKED UP A LITTLE FRENCH BUT SPOKE NO RUSSIAN. WISHING TO INFORM MRS F. OF WHAT HAD OCCURRED. HE HAD RECOURSE TO A PROFESSIONAL LETTER-WRITER. WHO PERHAPS KNEW AS LITTLE FRENCH, OR ALMOST AS LITTLE, AS HIMSELF. AND WAS ENTIRELY IGNORANT OF ENGLISH. THE SERVANT GAVE THE DATES I HAVE SET DOWN-JUNE 6TH IN THE FIRST LETTER. THE 12TH IN THE SECOND. THE LETTER-WRITER PLIT THEM DOWN: AND MRS E. READ AND IMMEDIATELY ACCEPTED THEM. IT DID NOT CROSS HER MIND OR CAPTAIN E.'S THAT THE DATES USED WERE THE ORDINARY RUSSIAN DATES-WERE IN FACT 'OLD STYLE' AND CONSEQUENTLY TWELVE DAYS BEHIND THE RECKONING OF GERMANY OR OF ENGLAND. THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN PUT ON INQUIRY BY THE LONG INTERVAL BETWEEN THE DATE OF THE DEATH AS IT WAS GIVEN AND THE RECEIPT OF THE NEWS: IN THEIR EXCITEMENT THEY PAID NO HEED TO IT, AND IT DID NOT COOLIR FITHER TO MADAME DE KRIES OR TO MYSELE TO RAISE THE QUESTION. INDEED WHO THINKS OF THE 'Old Style' at this period of the world's history? Besides, I did not KNOW AT THAT TIME, AND I DO NOT THINK THAT MADAME DE KRIES DID. WHERE THE FIRST LETTER CAME FROM: MRS F. SAID NOTHING ABOUT IT. BUT

UNDERSTOOD—THE MISTAKE WAS CLEAR, FOR A NOTE IN THE OFFICIAL'S HAND TRANSLATED THE DATES INTO NEW STYLE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FOREIGNERS TO WHOM HE WAS SUFFLYING THE DOCUMENT. SIR R. E., FIRST REPORTED DEAD ON JUNE 6TH OLD STYLE, OTHERWISE JUNE 18TH NEW STYLE, HAD ACTUALLY DIED ON THE 12TH OLD STYLE, OR 24TH NEW STYLE.

HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT THIS ONE OF THE MOST PERVERSE LITTLE INCIDENTS WHICH I HAVE MET WITH IN THE COURSE OF MY LIFE, AND I THINK IT SUCH STILL. WHEN I CONSIDER HOW EASILY IT MIGHT HAVE DONE NO HARM. AND

HOW SERIOUS, AND INDEED IRREPARABLE, IT'S ACTUAL CONSEQUENCES

WHEN THE CERTIFICATE ARRIVED-ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF JULY, AS I

CONFUSION, SINCE IT CAUSED MRS F.'S WEDDING TO TAKE PLACE WHILE HER HUSBAND, SIR R., HAD STILL A DAY TO LIVE BUT THIS EFFOR WOULD NOT IN ITSELF HAVE PROVED FATAL, SINCE THERE WOULD STILL HAVE BEEN TIME TO REPEAT THE CEREMONY AND MAKE A VALID MARRIAGE OF IT BEFORE THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD. HERE THE MISAPPREHENSION ABOUT THE OLD STYLE CAME IN. LED TO BELIEVE THAT, ALTHOUGH SIR R. LIVED SIX DAYS LONGER THAN WAS ORIGINALLY REPORTED, YET NONE THE LESS HE DIED ON JUNE 12TH, THE F.'S DID NOT HAVE THE CEREMONY REPEATED. BUT HE DIED, IN FACT, ON THE 24TH AS HIS WIFE RECKONED TIME, AND HER MEDDING TO CAPTAIN F. ON THE 23TH WAS AN ID IS AND USE BOYS FORM

WHEN THE DISCOVERY WAS MADE. THE BOY WAS BORN—AND BORN OUT

WHAT DID THEY DO THEN? I WAS PARDONABLY INTERESTED IN THE MATTER.

of lawful wedlock

Old Style.

WERE. THE MISTAKE AS TO THE DATE OF DEATH WAS THE FIRST SOLIROF OF

AND INCURRED OF MADAME DE KRIES. SHE WAS RETICENT, BUT I EXTRACTED FROM HER THE INFORMATION THAT THEY WERE HURRIEDLY MARRIED AGAIN. ONE COULD LAUGH IF THE MATTER HAD NOT BEEN SO TERRIBLY SERVOUS TO THEM AND TO THER BOY. FOR BY NOW THOSE EVENTS had actually happened, and Mrs F. Was not indeed in possession OF BUT NEXT IN SUCCESSION TO A CONSIDERABLE ESTATE AND AN ANCIENT TITLE MARRYING AGAIN COULD NOT MEND THE MATTER. WHAT ELSE THEY DID TO MEND OR TRY TO MEND IT, MADAME DE KRIES PROFESSED NOT TO KNOW. I MYSELF DO NOT KNOW BITHER. THERE IS ONLY ONE THING TO SAY. THEY COULD NOT ALTER THE DATE OF THE DEATH, THEY COULD NOT ALTER THE DATE OF THE BIRTH. ATT ANY RATE, THAT IS NO BUSINESS OF MINE. I HAVE SET THE STONE DOWN BECAUSE IT SEEMED A CUROUS AND INTERESTING EPISODE, BUT IT IS NOTHING TO ME WHO

MY OWN PART, I AM INCLINED TO HOPE THAT THE BABY'S PROSPECTS IN LIFE WILL NOT BE WRECKED BY THE ABSURD RUSSIAN HABIT OF USING THE MR JENKINSON NEELD LAID DOWN HIS FRIEND'S JOURNAL AND LEANT BACK IN his chair. "Really!" he murmured to himself, "Really, really!"

TO RETURN TO SERIOUS QUESTIONS, THE CUSTOMS-BARRIER

Frowning in a perplexed fashion, he pushed the manuscript aside and

hetween----'

TWIDDLED THE BLUE PENCIL BETWEEN HIS FINGERS. THE CLISTOMS-BARRIER OF which Josiah Cholderton was about to speak had no power to interest

HIM. THE STORY WHICH HE HAD READ INTERESTED HIM A GOOD DEAL: IT WAS

AN ODD LITTLE BIT OF HUWAN HISTORY. A DISASTROUS TURN OF HUWAN FORTUNES. BESIDES. MR NEELD KNEW HIS LONDON. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD AT THE

JOURNAL REPROVINGLY, ROSE FROM HIS CHAIR, WENT TO HIS BOOK-CASE, AND TOOK DOWN A PERRAGE A REMINS CENCE WAS RUNNING IN HIS HEAD. HE

TURNED TO THE LETTER T (A.H. THOSE HOLLOWLY DISCREET, PAINFULLY INDISCREET INITIALS OF JOSIAH CHOLDERTON'S! MYSTERIES PERHAPS IN BAXTON, YORKS.

BUT NONE IN PALL MALL!) AND SEARCHED THE PAGES. THIS WAS THE BYTRY AT WHICH HIS FINGER STOPPED—OR RATHER PART OF THE BNTRY. FOR THE VOLUME HAD MORE TO SAY ON THE FAMILY THAN IT IS NEEDFUL EITHER TO BELIEVE OR TO

repeat:-

"Tristram of Blent-Adelaide Louisa Aimée. In her own right BARONESS-23RD IN DESCENT. THE BARONY DESCENDING TO HERS. GENERAL. BORN 17TH DECEMBER 1853, MARRIED FIRST SIR RANDOLPH

EDGE, BART.—NO ISSUE SECONDLY, CAPTAIN HENRY VINCENT FITZHUBERT (LATE SCOTS GUARDS), DIED 1877. ISSUE-ONE SON (AND

HER) HON, HENRY AUSTEN FITZHUBERT TRISTRAM, BORN 20TH JULY 1875.

THE NAME OF TRISTRAM WAS ASSUMED IN LIFELOF FITZHLIBERT BY ROYAL Licence 1884. Seat—Blent Hall. Devon——"

HERE MR NEELD LAID DOWN THE BOOK. HE HAD SEEN WHAT HE WANTED, AND HAD NO FURTHER CONCERN WITH THE ANCESTRY. THE RAMIFICATIONS, THE ELOQUENT. BY ITSELF IT HINTED A SCANDAL—ELSE WHY NO DATES FOR THE MARRIAGES? WITH THE JOURNAL IT SAID SOMETHING MORE. FOR THE 20TH IS NOT "FARLY IN JULY." YET MR NEELD HAD NEVER HEARD.—IT HE SHUT THE BOOK HASTILY AND PUT IT BACK ON THE SHELF. RETURNING TO HIS DESK, HE TOOK UP THE BLUE PENCIL. BUT ON SECOND THOUTHIS THIS INSTRUMENT DUT OUT ONTONTHIS THE BLUE PENCIL. BUT ON SECOND THOUTHIS THIS INSTRUMENT OUT OUT FROM THE MIN. SCISSOR'S WERE TO HIS HAND; WITH THEM HE CAREFULLY OUT OUT FROM THE MANUSCRIPT THE WHOLE ACCOUNT OF MR CHOLDERTON'S VISIT TO HEIDELBERG (HE WOULD RUN NO RSKS, AND THERE WAS NOTHING IMPORTANT IN IT), DATED IT, MARKED IT WITH THE PAGE TO WHICH IT BELONGED IN THE JOURNAL, AND locked it away in a drawer.

HE FELT RESENTIFUL TOWARD HIS DEAD FRIEND JOSIAH CHOLDERTON. IF THERE BE A SAFE RASTIME, ONE WARRANTED TO LEAD A MAN INTO NO TROUBLE AND TO BYTANGLE HIM IN NO SCANDALS. IT WOULD SERM TO LIF IN POTING THE JOURNAL.

ABODES OR POSSESSIONS OF THE TRISTRAMS OF BLENT. TO HIM WHO KNEW, THE ENTRY ITSELF WAS EXPRESSIVE IN WHAT IT SAID AND IN WHAT IT OMTITED; READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH JOSIAH CHOLDERTON'S JOLEWAL IT WAS YET MORE

THE HYGROXERIC METHOD OF DRESSING WOOL. JOSIAH CHOLDERTON HAD—NOT QUITE FOR THE FIRST TIME—PLAYED HIM FALSE. BUT NEVER SO BADLY AS this before!

"GOOD GRACIOUS ME!" HE MUTTERED. "THE THING IS NOTHING MORE NOR LESS than an imputation on the legitimacy of the son and heir!"

THAT SAME AFTERNOON HE WENT OVER TO THE IMPERIUM TO VOTE AT THE ELECTION OF MEMBERS. IT STRUCK HIM AS ONE OF THE SMALL COINDENCES OF LIFE THAT AMONG THE CANDIDATES WHO FACED THE BALLIOT WAS A COLONEL WIIMOT Edge, R.E.

OF A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, A COMMERCIAL DELEGATE, AN INVENTOR OF

AFFIRMATIVE BALL. BUT IT MAY BE ADDED, SINCE NOT EVEN THE SECRETS OF CLUB BALLOTS ARE TO BE HELD SACRED, THAT HE BESTOMED ONE OF A DIFFERENT SORT ON A CERTAIN MR WILLIAM IVER, WHO WAS DESCRIBED AS A "CONTRACTOR." AND WHOSE NAME WAS FAMILIAR AND CONSPICUOUS ON THE

"Any relation. I wonder?" Mused Mr Neeld as he dropped in an

HOARDINGS THAT SCREENED NEW BULDINGS IN LONDON, AND WAS consequently objectionable to Mr Neeld's fastidious mind.
"I DON'T OFTEN BLACKBALL," HE REMARKED TO LORD SOUTHEND AS THEY WERE SITTING DOWN TO WHIST, "BUT, REALLY, DON'T YOU THINK THE IMPERIUM SHOULD maintain—er—a certain level?"
"Iver's a devilish rich fellow and not a bad fellow ether," grunted my lord.

Mr Cholderton's Imp

"YES, MADAME, AN ELEGANT AND SPACIOUS RESIDENCE, FILTON PARK. THE PHOTO? HERE IT IS, MADAME. AND NOTTS IS A VERY ELIGIBLE COUNTY—
SOCIALLY SPEAKING, REMARKABLY ELIGIBLE; IVE SENT SEVERAL FAMILIES TO NOTTS. THAT PHOTO, MADAME? HATCHLEY MANOR, IN SUSSEX. YES, GOOD POSITION—A TRIFLE LOW PERHAPS—I HAVE HEARD COMPLAINTS OF—ER—EFFLUVIUM FROM THE RIVER—I'M ANXIOUS TO GIVE YOU PERFECT SATISFACTION, MADAME. IT WOULDN'T PAY ME NOT TO. I WANT YOU TO COME BACK, MADAME, ANOTHER SUMMER. I PLAY FOR THE BREAK, IF I MAY SO PUT IT—I BEG YOUR PARDON! YES, BIRDOUP IS REALLY A PALATIAL RESIDENCE—HANTS, YES—A BEAUTIFLL COUNTY. BUT BETWEEN CURSELVES, MADAME, HIS LORDSHIP IS A LITTLE HARD TO DEAL WITH. DILAPIDATIONS I RETER TO, YES—HIS LORDSHIP IS EXACTING AS TO DILAPIDATIONS. ON THE WHOLE, I SHOULD PRETER TO RECOMMEND WINTER-HURST—NEAR MAIDSTONE—A RLEASANT TOWN, MAIDSTONE, AND THE CLERGY, I'M INFORMED, EXTREMELY ACTIVE AND SYMPATCHED.

"It's a VERY UGLY HOUSE," REMARKED MADAME ZABRISKA, THROWING AWAY the photograph of Winterhurst with a gesture of decided refusal.

Mr Sloyd stroked his sleek hair and smiled deprecatingly.

"With residences as with—er—Ladies, beauty is only skin deep," said he. "A thoroughly modern residence, madame—hot and cold—south aspect." He stopped suddenly, perceiving that the queer dark little woman in the big chair was laughing at him. "I Don't intend to convey," he resumed with dignity, "that the mansion is hot and cold, but the

"OH, I KNOW," SHE INTERRUPTED, HER GREAT BLACK EYES STILL DERIDING HIM, While her thin face was screwed up into seriousness, as she regarded

MR SLOYD'S BLAMELESS GARMENTS OF SPRINGTIME GRAY, HIS BLACK-AND-WHITE TIE, HIS HAIR SO VERY SLEEK, HIS DROOPING MUSTACHE, AND HIS PINK CHEEKS. SHE HAD TAKEN HIS MEASURE AS PERFECTLY AS THE TAILOR HINGELF, AND WAS BNIOYING THE COUNTERFEIT PRESENTIMENT OF A REAL LONDON DANDY

bath-rooms——"

WHO CAME TO HER IN THE SHAPE OF A HOUSE-AGENT. "I DON'T WANT A BIG PLACE," SHE EXPLAINED IN ENGLISH, WITH A FOREIGN TOUCH ABOUT IT. "THERE'S ONLY MYSELF AND MY UNCLE, MAJOR DUPLAY—HE'LL BE IN DIRECTLY, I

"THERE'S ONLY MYSELF AND MY UNCLE, MAJOR DUPLAY—HELL BE IN DRECTLY, I expect—and we've no more money than we want, Mr Sloyd."

SLOYD'S EYES WANDERED BOLND THE LABGE AND HANDSOME SITTING-BOOM IN

Berridge's Hotel, where he found his client established.

"OH, IT DOESN'T MATTER FOR A FEW DAYS," SHE ADDED, DETECTING HIS DEA and smilling again.

THIS EXPLANATION OF HER POSITION HAD THE EFFECT OF MAKING SLOYD'S manner rather less florid and his language less flowery.

"Among second-class but eminently genteel residences," he began, "I could confidently recommend——"

"Where's this?" She interrupted, floxing up another photograph, and regarding it with apparent liking. Looking at the foot, she read aloud, "Merron Loose, property of the Right Honorable Baroness Tristram

of Blent." She looked up sharply at Sloyd.
"YEB, YEB," SAID SLOYD, WITHOUT MUCH BYTHUSASM. "A VERY PRETTY

"YE-ES, YE-ES," SAID SLOYD, WITHOUT MUCH ENTHUSIASM. "A VERY PRETTY
NEIGHBORHOOD—A FEW MLES FROM BLENTMOUTH—RISING PLACE,
BLENTMOUTH. AND IT'S A CHEAP HOUSE—SWALL, YOU SEE, AND OLDfashioned."

Not bet and cold?!! abo colved with apparent improcess.

"Not hot and cold?" she asked with apparent innocence.

HE WAITED FOR HER TO SPEAK AGAIN, BUT SHE HAD TURNED THOUGHTFUL AS SHE SAT FINGERING THE PHOTOGRAPH. PRESENTLY SHE SMILED AGAIN AND said, "Yes, find out about Merrion Lodge for me, Mr Slovd,"

SLOYD SMLED UNCONFORTABLY. "I COULD ASCERTAIN ALL THAT FOR YOU.

He began to gather up his pictures and papers. "Is Baron Tristram alive?" she asked suddenly.

"Her ladyship is a peeress in her own right." he explained.

"She's not married then?" "A widow, madame,"

madame "

"And wasn't her husband Baron Tristram?"

Slovd recovered his air of superiority.

"HER HUSBAND WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN LORD-EXCUSE ME, MADAME, WE

SAY LORD-TRISTRAM OF BLENT. HER SON WILL SUCCEED TO THE TITLE, OF

COURSE. THE FAMILY RESIDE AT BLENT HALL, ONLY A FEW HUNDRED YARDS FROM

MERRION LODGE, A PICTURESQUE MANSION IN THE VALLEY. THE LODGE, YOU

perceive, stands high." "I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS." REMARKED MADAME.

Zabriska, "but I daresay I shall learn it all if I go," "IF YOU HAD A 'PERAGE' MADAME ----" HE SUGGESTED. BEING HIMSELF

rather vague about the mysteries of a barony by writ.

"I'll get one from the waiter presently, Good-morning, Mr Sloyd," SLOYD WAS MAKING HIS BOW WHEN THE DOOR OPENED AND A MAN CAME

IN. HE WAS TALL, ERECT. AND GOOD-LOOKING, BOTH AIR AND MANNER WERE YOUTHFUL. ALTHOUGH PERHAPS WITH A TRACE OF ARTIFICE: HE WOULD PASS FOR "MY UNCLE, MAJOR DUPLAY," SAID THE LITTLE WOMAN. "THIS IS MR SLOYD, who's come about the house, uncle."

DUPLAY GREETED THE HOUSE-AGENT WITH GRAVE COURTESY, AND ENTERED INTO CONVERSATION WITH HIM, WHILE MADAME ZABRISKA, RELAPSED AGAIN INTO an allert silence, watched the pair.

THE LAST THING THAT MADAME ZABRISKA—THE STYLE SAT CODLY ON HER CHLD-LIKE FACE AND FIGURE, BUT MINA ZABRISKA AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-BIGHT HAD BEEN A WIDOW THREE YEARS—DESIRED TO DO WAS HARM, THE THING SHE BEST LOVED TO MAKE WAS MISCHEF. THE ESSENCE OF MISCHEF LAY FOR HER —PERHAPS FOR EVERYBODY—IN CURIOSITY; IT WAS TO PUT PEOPLE IN THE

thirty-five on a casual glance, but not after a longer one.

SITUATIONS IN WHICH THEY LEAST EXPECTED TO FIND THEMSELVES, AND TO COSSERVE HOW THEY COMPORTED THEMSELVES THEMEN. AS FOR HURTING THEIR INTERESTS OR EVEN THEIR FEELINGS—NO; SHE WAS CERTAIN THAT SHE DID NOT WANT THAT; WAS SHE NOT ALWAYS TERRIBLY SORRY WHEN THAT HAPPENED, AS IT sometimes, and quite unaccountably, did? She would weep then—but FOR THEIR MISFORTURE. BE IT UNDERSTOOD, NOT FOR ANY FAULT OF HERS. PEOPLE

DID NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTAND HER; HER MOTHER HAD UNDERSTOOD HER PERFECTLY, AND CONSEQUENTLY HAD NEVER INTERFERED WITH HER WAYS. MINALOVED A MYSTIFICATION TOO, AND ESPECIALLY TO MYSTIFY UNCLE DURLAY, WHO

THOUGHT HIMSELF SO CLEVER—WAS CLEVER INDEED AS MEN WENT, SHE
ACKNOWLEDGED GENEROUSLY; BUT MEN DID NOT GO FAR. IT WOULD BE FUN TO
CHOOSE MERRION LODGE FOR HER SUMMER HOME, FIRST BECAUSE HER UNCLE
WOULD WONDER WHY IN THE WORLD SHE TOOK IT, AND SECONDLY BECAUSE SHE
HAD GUESSED THAT SOMEBODY MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO SEE HER THERE. SO

SHE LAD HER FLAN, EVEN AS SHE HAD FLAYED HER TRICKS IN THE DAYS WHEN SHE WAS AN ODD LITTLE GIRL, AND MR CHOLDERTON, NOT LIKING HER, HAD WITH SOME Unstice christoped her the Imp

some justice christened her the Imp.

Major Durlay Bowed Mr Sloyd to the door with the understanding that full details of Merron Lodge were to be furnished in a day or two.

Coming Back to the hearth-rug he spoke to his nece in French, as was the custom with the pair when they were alone. "AND NOW, DEAR MINA." SAID HE, "WHAT HAS MADE YOU SET YOUR MIND ON what seems distinctly the least desirable of these houses?"

"People always do as soon as they've got any money." Replected DUBLAY IN A BLEZIED TONE "IF YOU WERE ON HALE-BAY AS LAM, YOU'D NEVER

"WELL. I'VE ANOTHER REASON." THIS WAS ALREADY SAYING MORE THAN SHE

"It's the cheapest, I expect, and I want to economize."

want to do it."

had meant to sav.

"Certainly not."

"Which you don't mean to tell me?"

With a shrug he took out his cigarette-case and handed it to her. "YOU AND YOUR SECRETS!" HE EXCLAIMED GOOD-HUMOREDLY, "REALLY, MINA. I MORE THAN EARN MY KEEP BY THE PLEASURE I GIVE YOU IN NOT TELLING ME

things. And then you go and do it!" "SHAN'T THIS TIME," SAID MR CHOLDERTON'S IMP, SEEMING NOT A DAY MORE than ten, in spite of her smoking cigarette and her smart costume.

"Luckily I'm not curious—and I can trust you to do nothing wrong." "WELL. I SUPPOSE SO," SHE AGREED WITH SCORNFUL COMPOSURE. "DID YOU

ever hear mother speak of a Mrs Fitzhubert?" THE MAJOR SMILED UNDER HIS HEAVY MUSTACHE AS HE ANSWERED, "Never."

"WELL. I HAVE." SAID MINA WITH A WORLD OF SIGNIFICANCE. "I HEARD HER FIRST.

through the door." she added with a candid smile. "I was listening."

"You often were in those days." "Oh. I AM STILL—BUT ON THE INSIDE OF THE DOOR NOW. AND SHE TOLD ME ABOUT IT AFTERWARD OF HER OWN ACCORD. BUT IT WOULDN'T INTEREST YOU. uncle " "Not in its present stage of revelation," he agreed, with a little vawn. "THE FLINNY OLD ENGLISHMAN—YOU NEVER SAW HIM DID YOU?—MR CHOLDERTON—HE KNEW HER. HE RATHER ADMRED HER TOO. HE WAS THERE WHEN SHE RUSHED IN AND _____ NEVER MIND! I WAS THERE TOO—SLICH A GLY! I HAD CORKSOREW CURLS, YOU KNOW, AND A VERY SHORT FROCK, AND VERY LONG-OTHER THINGS. OH, THOSE FRILLS!-AND I SUPPOSE I REALLY WAS THE LIGHEST CHILD EVER BORN. OLD CHOLDERTON HATED ME—HE'D HAVE LIKED TO BOX MY EARS. I KNOW. BUT I THINK HE WAS A LITTLE IN LOVE WITH MRS Fitzhubert, Oh. I've never asked for that 'Peerage!" MAJOR DURLAY HAD RESIGNED HIMSELF TO A PATIENT ENDURANCE OF INADEQUATE HINTS. HIS WITS WERE NOT EQUAL TO PUTTING TOGETHER THE PIECES OR CONDUCTING A SORT OF "MISSING WORD." OR MISSING LINK. EXERCISE TO A TRIUMPHANT ISSUE. IN TIME HE WOULD KNOW ALL-SUPPOSING. THAT IS. THAT THERE WERE REALLY ANYTHING TO KNOW. MEANWHILE HE WAS NOT

THAT IS, THAT THERE WERE REALLY ANYTHING TO KNOW. MEANWHILE HE WAS NOT CURIOUS ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S AFFAIRS; HE MINDED HIS OWN BUSINESS.

KEEPING YOUNG COCUPED MUCH OF HIS TIME, AND THEN THERE WAS ALWAYS

THE QUESTION OF HOW IT MIGHT PROVE POSSIBLE TO SUPPLIEMENT THE HALF-PRY

TO WHICH HIS YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE SWISS ARMY ENTITLED HIM, IT WAS

SCANTY. AND BUT FOR HIS NECE'S HOSPITALITY REALLY INSUFFICIENT. HE THOUGHT

THAT HE WAS A CLEVER MAN, HE HAD REWAINED AN HONEST MAN, AND HE
SAW NO REASON WHY FORTUNE SHOULD NOT SOME DAY MAKE HIM A
COMFORTABLE MAN, SHE HAD NEVER DONE SO YET, HAVING SENT HIM INTO THE
WORLD AS THE FIFTH CHILD OF A PROTESTANT PASTOR IN A FRENCH-SPEAKING

CANTON, AND NEVER HAVING GIVEN HIM SO MUCH AS A WELL- TO-DO RELATIVE (EVEN MADAME DE KRIES' VILLA WAS ON A MODEST SCALE) UNTIL MINA

MARRIED ADOLF ZABRISKA AND KEPT THAT GENTLEWAN'S MONEY ALTHOUGH
SHE HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO LOSE HS COMPANY, HIS DEATH SHEWED TO

complaint on her uncle's part.

PRESUMABLY MR SLOYD'S INCURRES ELICITED SATISFACTORY INFORMATION;
PERHAPS MINA WAS NOT HARD TO PLEASE. AT ALL EVENTS, A WEEK LATER SHE
AND THE MAJOR GOT OUT AT BLENTIMOUTH STATION AND FOUND SLOYD HIMSELF
WAITING TO DRIVE WITH THEM TO MERRION LODGE, HE HAD INSISTED ON
SEEING THEM INSTALLED; DOUBTLESS HE WAS, AS HE PUT IT, PLAYING FOR THE
BREAK AGAIN. HE SAT IN THE LANDAU WITH HIS BACK TO THE HORSES AND
POINTED OUT THE FEATURES OF INTEREST ON THE ROAD; HIS COURLE OF DAYS'
stay in the neighborhood seemed to have made him an old inhabitant.

DUPLAY AT LEAST NO GREAT CALAMITY; THAT HE HAD DIED CHLDLESS DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE DISAPPOINTED MINA AND WAS CERTAINLY NO GROUND OF

HAND OVER BLENTIMOUTH IN PATRONZING ENCOURAGEMENT. "TWO THOUSAND WINTER, THREE FIVE SUMMER MONTHS NOW—LARGELY DUE TO WILLIAM IVER, ESQUIRE, OF FAIRHOLME—WE SHALL PASS FAIRHOLME DIRECTLY—A WEALTHY gentleman who takes great interest in the development of the town."

IT WAS ALL GREEK TO THE MAJOR, BUT HE NOODED POLITIELY. MINA WAS LOOKING

"FIVE HUNDRED POPULATION FIVE YEARS AGO." HE OBSERVED. WAVING HIS

"THAT'S FAIRHOLME," SLOYD WENT ON, AS THEY CAME TO A LARGE AND RATHER NEW HOUSE SITUATED ON THE SKIRTIS OF BLENTMOUTH. "OBSERVE THE GLASS—THOSE HOUSES COST THOUSANDS OF POUNDS—GROWS FEACHES ALL THE YEAR, THEY TELL ME. AT THIS POINT, MADAME ZABRISKA, WE TURN AND PURSUE THE ROAD BY THE RIVER." AND SO HE CEASED NOT TO HAY GUIDE-BOOK TILL HE

NOADED THE NOVER. AND SO HE CASSED NOT TO HAY GOLDEBOOK TILL HE LANDED THEM AT THE DOOR OF MERRION LODGE ITSELF, AFTER A SLOW CRAWL. OF A QUARTER OF A MILE UPHILL. BELOW THEM IN THE VALLEY LAY THE LITTLE BLENT, SPARKLING IN THE SUNSHINE OF A SUMMER AFTERNOON, AND BEYOND THE

RIVER, FACING THEM ON THE OPPOSITE BANK, NO MORE PERHAPS THAN FIVE
HUNDRED YARDS AWAY, WAS BLENT HALL. MINA RAN TO THE PARAPET OF THE
LEVELLED TERRACE ON WHICH THE LODGE STOOD, AND LOOKED DOWN, BLENT

HALL MADE THREE SIDES OF A SQUARE OF OLD RED-BROCK MASONRY, WITH A
TOWER IN THE CENTRE: IT FACED THE RIVER, AND BROAD GRAVE.-WALKS AND

"Among the minor seats of the nobility Blent is considered a very PERFECT EXAMPLE" SHE HEARD SLOYD SAY TO THE MAJOR. WHO WAS UNORTRUST/ELY BUT STEADILY LIRGING HIM IN THE DIRECTION OF THE LANDALL She turned to bid him good-by, and he came up to her, hat in hand. "THANK YOU, I LIKE THE PLACE" SHE SAID, "DO YOU—DO YOU THINK WE SHALL. make acquaintance with the people at Blent Hall?" "HER LADYSHE'S IN POOR HEALTH, I HEAR, BUT I SHOULD IMAGINE SHE WOULD. make an effort to call or at least send cards. Good-by, madame." DUPLAY SUCCEEDED IN STARTING THE ZEALOUS MAN ON HIS HOMEWARD. JOURNEY AND THEN WENT INTO THE HOUSE. MINA REVAINING STILL OUTSIDE.

broader lawns of level close-shaven turf ran down to the water's edge.

ENGAGED IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF HER NEW SURROUNDINGS. ABOVE ALL OF BLENT HALL, WHICH WAS INVESTED WITH A SPECIAL INTEREST FOR HER EYES. IT was the abode of Mrs Fitzhubert. WITH A LITTLE START SHE TURNED TO FIND A YOUNG MAN STANDING JUST ON THE

OTHER SIDE OF THE PARAPET: SHE HAD NOT NOTICED HIS APPROACH TILL HE HAD

GIVEN A LOW COUGH TO ATTRACT HER ATTENTION. AS HE RAISED HIS HAT HER QUICK VISION TOOK HIM IN AS IT WERE IN A COMPLETE PICTURE—THE THIN YET WELL-MADE BODY. THE SLIGHT STOOP IN THE SHOULDERS. THE HIGH FOREHEAD BORDERED WITH THICK DARK HAIR GROWING IN SUCH A SHAPE THAT THE BROW

SEEMED TO RISE ALMOST TO A PEAK, A LONG NOSE, A SENSITIVE MOUTH, A POINTED CHIN. DARK EYES WITH DOWNWARD LIDS. THE YOUNG MAN-SHE WOULD HAVE GUESSED HIM AT TWENTY-TWO OR THREE-HAD A COMPLETE COMPOSURE OF MANNER; SOMEHOW SHE FELT HERSELF IN THE PRESENCE OF

the lord of the soil—an absurd thing to feel, she told herself. "MADAME ZABRISKA? MY MOTHER, LADY TRISTRAM, HAS SENT ME TO BID

YOU WELCOME IN HER NAME, BUT NOT TO DISTURB YOU BY COMING IN SO SOON AFTER YOUR JOURNEY. IT IS OUR TRADITION TO WELCOME GLESTS AT THE MOMENT

of their arrival."

HE SPOKE RATHER SLOWLY, IN A PLEASANT VOICE, BUT WITH SOMETHING IN HIS AIR THAT PUZZLED MINA. IT SEEMED LIKE A SORT OF WATCHPULNESS—NOT A SLYNESS (THAT WOULD HAVE FITTED SO BADLY WITH THE REST OF HIM), BUT PERHARS ONE MICHT SAY A WARINESS—WHETHER DIRECTED AGAINST HER OR himself it was too soon for her even to conjecture.

Still rather startled, she forgot to express her thanks, and said simply:

WAY; BUT IT WAS A SUCCESS WHEN IT CAME. "I USE MY FATHER'S NAME ONLY AS A CHRISTIAN NAME NOW. TRISTIRAM IS MY SURNAME. THAT ALSO. IF I MAY

"Mr Tristram," he corrected her; and she noticed now for the first time the slow-moving smile which soon became his leading characteristic in her thoughts. It took slich a time to spread. It seemed to feel its

"You're Mr Fitzhubert Tristram?"

repeat myself, is one of our traditions."

laughing a little.

"For anyBODY IN THE DIRECT LINE TO TAKE THE NAME OF TRISTRAM—SO THAT,

"What, to change your names? The Men, I MEAN?" SHE ASKED.

IN SPITE OF THE FAILURE OF MALE HERS FROM TIME TO TIME. THE TRISTRAMS OF

BLENT SHOULD ALWAYS BE TRISTRAMS, YOU KNOW, AND NOT FITZHUBERTS, OR Leighs, or Merrions——"

"Merrion?" "My great-great—I forget how many greats—grandfather was a

Merrion and——"

"Built this house?"

"Oh, no—a house where this stands. The old house was burnt down in '95"

"As recently as that?" she exclaimed in surprise.

MINA FELT THAT THERE WAS HERE A TOUCH OF PRIDE, WITH A MORE COMPLETE MASTERY OF IDIOMATIC ENGLISH SHE MIGHT HAVE CALLED IT "SWAGGER."

NOTHING COUNTED THAT WAS LESS THAN A CENTURY OLD, IT SEEMED, AND HE SPOKE OF A HUNDRED YEARS' STANDING AS SHE MIGHT OF A WOODEN SHANTY. DEODEDLY HE WAS CONSCIOUS OF HIS POSITION—OVER-CONSCIOUS

"1795." he explained. "and this house was run up then."

"I'M GLAD IT WAS RUN UP IN TIME FOR US TO TAKE IT," SHE SAID, THINKING SHE would try the effect of a little chaff.

The effect was nothing: Harry Tristram took no notice of the remark.

looking up our recent history."

"OH, JUST WHAT THERE IS IN THE 'PEERAGE." HER LOOK WAS MISCHEVOUS NOW, BUT SHE RESTRANED HERSELF FROM ANY HINT OF SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE. "I'LL tell you as much of ours some day."

SHE BROKE INTO A LAUGH. AND THEN, CARRIED AWAY BY THE BEAUTY OF THE

SCENE. THE RIVER AND THE STATELY PEACEFUL OLD HOUSE BY IT. SHE STRETCHED

"I see." he observed, "from your calling me Fitzhubert that you've been

out her hands toward Blent Hall, exclaiming:
"But we haven't anything like that in our history!"
HE TURNED TO LOOK WITH HER, AND STOOD IN SILENCE FOR A MINUTE OR TWO.

Then he spoke softly.

"Yes. Hove it." he said.

SHE GLANCED AT HIM, HIS EYES WERE TENDER. TURNING, HE SAW HER GLANCE. IN A MOMENT HE SEEMED TO VEIL HIS EYES AND TO TRY TO EXCLISE

the sentimental tone of his remark by a matter-of-fact comment:

"BUT OF COURSE A MAN COMES TO LIKE A PLACE WHEN HE'S BEEN

accustomed to think of it as his home for all his life past and to come."
"What would you do if you lost it?" she asked.

AGAN FROM HER AND TOWARD HS HOME. "WE'VE HAD IT SIX HUNDRED YEARS;
we shan't lose it now, I think."

"No, I suffose not." He was HOLDING OUT HS HAND. "GOOD-BY, MR
Tristram. May I come and thank your mother?"

"I'VE NO INTENTION OF LOSING IT." HE ANSWERED, LAUGHING, BUT LOOKING

"I'll save her the journey up the hill."

He bowed in courteous acceptance of her offer as he shook hands.

"Oh. but she'll come here, if she's well enough,"

"You see the foot-bridge over the river there? There's a gate at each end, but the gates are never looked, so you can reach us from the road that way if you're walking. If you want to drive, you must go a quarter of a mle higher up. Just below the Pool... Good-by. Madame

QUARTER OF A MLE HIGHER UP, JUST BELOW THE POOL. GOOD-BY, MADAME
ZABITISKA."

MINA WATCHED HIM ALL THE WAY DOWN THE HILL. HE HAD MADE AN

MINA WATCHED HIM ALL THE WAY DOWN THE HILL. HE HAD MADE AN IMPRESSION ON HER—AN INTELLECTUAL IMPRESSION, NOT A SENTIMENTAL ONE.

THERE WAS NOTHING OF THE BOY ABOUT HIM, UNLESS IT WERE IN THAT LITTLE FLOURSH OVER THE ANTIQUITY OF HIS HOUSE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS; EVEN THAT MIGHT BE THE USUAL THING—SHE HAD NOT SEEN BNOUGH OF HIS CLASS TO

JUDGE. THERE WAS TOO THAT LOVE OF THE PLACE WHICH HE HAD SHOWN. Lastly, THERE WAS THE ODD AIR OF WARNESS AND WATCHING; SUCH IT seemed to her, and it consented to seem nothing else.

"I WONDER," SHE THOUGHT, "IF HE KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT MIRS FITZHUBERT— AND I WONDER IF IT WOULD MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO HIM!" MENORY CARRIED HER BACK IN AN INSTANT TO THE MOMENT WHEN SHE, MR CHOLDERTON'S IMP,

HEARD THAT BEAUTIFUL WOMAN CRY, "THINK OF THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES, THE BNORWOLDS DIFFERENCE" SHE DRRW IN HER BREATH IN A SUDDEN CASP. AN

chance of a situation which had never yet crossed her thoughts.	
"Good gradous, is it possible that he couldn't keep it, or that his mother couldn't give it to him, all the same?"	

IDEA HAD FLASHED INTO HER MIND, SHOWING HER FOR THE FIRST TIME THE

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On Guard

HARRY TRISTRAM WAS JUST ON TWENTY-THREE; TO OTHERS, AND TO HIMSELF TOO PERHAPS (IF A MAN HIMSELF CAN ATTAIN ANY CLEAR VIEW). HE SEEMED

OLDER EVEN THE EXTERNALS OF HIS YOUTH HAD DIFFERED FROM THE COMMON RUN. SENT TO SCHOOL LIKE OTHER BOYS. HE HAD COME HOME FROM HARROW ONE EASTER FOR THE USUAL SHORT HOLIDAY. HE HAD NEVER RETURNED: HE HAD NOT GONE TO THE UNIVERSITY: HE HAD BEEN ABROAD A GOOD DEAL, TRAVELLING AND STUDYING BUT ALWAYS IN HIS MOTHER'S COMPANY. IT WAS KNOWN THAT SHE WAS IN BAD HEALTH: IT WAS ASSUMED THAT EITHER SHE WAS VERY EXACTING OR HE VERY DEVOTED, SINCE TO SEPARATE HIM FROM HER APPEARED IMPOSSIBLE. YET THOSE WHO OBSERVED THEM TOGETHER SAW NO IMPERIOUSNESS ON HER PART AND NO EXCESS OF SENTIMENT ON HIS. Friendliness based on a thorough sympathy of mind was his attitude if HIS DEMEANOR REVEALED IT TRULY: WHILE LADY TRISTRAM WAS TO HER SON AS SHE WAS TO ALL THE WORLD AT THIS TIME. A CREATURE OF FEELINGS NOW HALF COLD AND OF MOODS THAT REFLECTED PALELY THE INTENSE IMPULSES OF HER YOUTH, BUT A FEW YEARS OVER FORTY, SHE GREW FADED AND FAINT IN MIND, IT SEEMED, AS WELL AS IN BODY, AND WAS NO LONGER A MERRY COMPADE TO THE BOY WHO NEVER LEFT HER. YET HE DID NOT WISH TO LEAVE HER. TO HER. INDEED, HE WAS NOT A BOY, AND NOBODY ABOUT THE PLACE REGARDED HIM AS OTHER THAN A MAN. HE HAD BEEN ACTUALLY AND EFFECTIVELY MASTER OF THE HOUSE FOR YEARS, JUST AS HE WAS MASTER OF HIS OWN DOINGS, OF HIS FRIENDSHIPS, RECREATIONS, AND PURSUITS, AND HE HAD EXCEPT THAT HE WAS NOT THOUGHT TO BE VERY HAPPY OR TO GET MUCH ENJOYMENT FROM HIS LIFE. THAT WAS JUST AN IDEA HE GAVE OF HIMSELF. AND GAVE INVOLUNTARILY—IN SPITE OF TAKING HIS FAIR SHARE IN THE AM ISPMENTS

OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD, AND HOLDING HIS OWN WELL IN ITS SPORTS AND ATHLETICS. BUT HE WAS CONSIDERED COLD AND VERY RESERVED. HAD MINA ZABRISKA REVEMBERED THIS USE OF "RESERVE." PERHAPS SHE WOULD HAVE EMPLOYED THE WORD INSTEAD OF "WARINESS." OR PERHAPS. IF HIS ACQUAINTANCES HAD LOOKED MORE KEENLY. THEY WOULD HAVE COME OVER TO MINA'S SIDE AND FOLIND HER TERM THE MORE ACCURATE. SHE SPOKE FROM a fresher and sharper impression of him. HIS CHLDHOOD AT LEAST HAD BEEN HAPPY, WHILE LADY TRISTRAM WAS STILL THE BEWLDERINGLY DELIGHTELL COMPANION WHO HAD GOT INTO SO MUCH HOT WATER AND MADE SO MANY PEOPLE FAGER TO GET IN AFTER HER. JOY LASTED WITH HER AS LONG AS HEALTH DID. AND HER HEALTH BEGAN TO FAIL ONLY WHEN HER SON APPROACHED FIFTEEN. ANOTHER THING HAPPENED ABOUT THEN. WHICH FORMED THE PRELUDE TO THE MOST VIVID SCENE IN THE BOY'S LIFE. I ADY TRISTRAM WAS NOT HABITIALLY A RELIGIOUS WOMAN: THAT TEMPER OF MIND WAS TOO ABSTRACT FOR HER: SHE MOVED AMONG EVIOTIONS AND IMAGES. AND HAD SWALL DEALINGS WITH MEDITATION OR SPIRITUAL CONCEPTIONS. BUT HAPPENING TO BE IN A MOOD THAT LAID HER OPEN TO THE INFLUENCE. SHE HEARD IN LONDON ONE DAY A SERMON PREACHED BY A YOUNG MAN FAMOUS AT THE TIME. A GREAT SEARCHER OF FASHIONABLE hearts. She drove straight from the church (it was a Friday morning) to PADDINGTON AND TOOK THE FIRST TRAIN HOVE. HARRY WAS THERE—BACK FROM SCHOOL FOR HIS HOLIDAY—AND SHE FOUND HIM IN THE SMOKING-ROOM. WEIGHING A FISH WHICH HE HAD CAUGHT IN THE POOL THAT THE BLENT FORMS ABOVE THE WER. THERE AND THEN SHE FELL ON HER KNEES ON THE FLOOR AND POURED FORTH TO HIM THE STORY OF THAT ODYSSEY OF HERS WHICH HAD SHOCKED LONDON SOCIETY AND IS TOUCHED UPON IN MR CHOLDERTON'S JOURNAL. HE LISTENED AMAZED. BYBARRASSED. PUZZLED UP TO A POINT: A

BOY'S NORWAL AWKWARDNESS WAS RAISED TO ITS HIGHEST PITCH; HE DID NOT WANT TO HEAR HS MOTHER CALL HERSELF A WICKED WOWAN; AND ANYHOW IT WAS A LONG WHILE AGO, AND HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND IT ALL VERY WELL. THE

WOMAN LIFTED HER EYES AND LOOKED AT HIM, SHE WAS CAUGHT BY THE LLXURY OF CONFESSION, OF HUMLIATION, OF OFFERING HER BACK TO THE WHP.

SHE TOLD HIM HE WAS NOT HER HER—THAT HE WOULD NOT BE TRISTRAM OF

EMBARRASSMENT HAD GONE HE WAS STANDING RIGIDLY STILL. HIS EYES GAZING OUT TOWARD THE RIVER. HIS FOREHEAD WRINKLED IN A FROWN. HE WAS THINKING. SHE WENT ON KNEELING THERE, SAYING NO MORE, STARING AT HER SON. IT WAS CHARACTERISTIC OF HER THAT SHE DID NOT RISK DIMINISHING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCENE, OR THE TRAGEDY OF HER AVOWAL, BY EXPLAINING THE PERVERSE ACCIDENT OWING TO WHICH HER FAULT HAD ENTAILED SUCH AN aggravation of evil. Harry learnt that later. LATER—AND IN A MOST DIFFERENT SORT OF INTERVIEW. FROM THE FIRST HARRY HAD NO THOUGHT OF SURRENDER: HIS MOTHER HAD NONE EITHER AS SOON AS SHE HAD FORGOTTEN HER PREACHER. THE DISCUSSION WAS RESUMED AFTER A WEEK (LADY TRISTRAM HAD SPENT THE INTERVAL IN BED) ON A BUSINESS FOOTING. SHE FOUND IN HIM THE SAME CARELESSNESS OF THE WORLD AND ITS

BLENT, FOR A MOMENT SHE LAID HER HEAD ON THE FLOOR AT HIS FEET, SHE HEARD NO SOUND FROM HIM, AND PRESENTLY LOOKED UP AT HIM AGAIN. HIS

SCORN AND ALLIED TO A TENACITY OF PURPOSE AND A KEENNESS OF VISION WHICH SHE HAD NEVER OWNED. NOT A REPROACH ESCAPED HIM—LESS. SHE THOUGHT, FROM GENEROSITY THAN BECAUSE HE CHOSE TO CONCENTRATE HIS MIND ON SOMETHING USEFUL. IT WAS NO USE LAMBNTING THE PAST: IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO UNDO IT FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES. THE AFFAIR WAS NEVER AGAIN REFERRED TO BETWEEN THEM EXCEPT AS A FACTOR RECOMMENDING OR DICTATING SOME COURSE OF ACTION: ITS PRIVATE SIDE—ITS REVELATION OF HER

OBLIGATIONS THAT THERE WAS IN HERSELF, BUT FOUND IT CARRIED TO THE POINT OF

AND ITS EFFECT (OR WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ITS EFFECT) ON HIS FEELINGS TOWARD HER-WAS NEVER SPOKEN OF LADY TRISTRAM THOUGHT THAT THE EFFECT WAS NOTHING. AND THE REVELATION NOT VERY SURPRISING TO HER SON.

HE ACCEPTED WITHOUT ARGUMENT HER OWN VIEW-THAT SHE HAD DONE NOTHING VERY STRANGE BUT HAD FALLEN ON VERY BAD LUCK. BUT HE TOLD HER AT ONCE THAT HE WAS NOT GOING BACK TO HARROW. SHE UNDERSTOOD: SHE AGREED TO BE WATCHED. SHE ABDICATED HER RULE. SHE PUT EVERYTHING IN

his hands and obeved him. THUS, AT FIFTEEN, HARRY TRISTRAM TOOK UP HIS BURDEN AND SEEMED TO

TAKE UP HIS MANHOOD TOO. HE NEVER WAVERED: HE ALWAYS ASSUMED THAT

HOLDING HIS FLACE BUT BOUND IN DUTY TO KEEP IT. SUCH PRACTICAL STEPS AS COULD BE TAKEN WERE TAKEN. THE CONFEDERATES SET NO LIMIT TO THER PREPARATIONS AGAINST DANCER AND THER DEVICES TO AVOID DETECTION. IF LIES WERE NECESSARY, THEY WOULD LIE, WHERE FALSIFICATION WAS WANTED, THEY FALSIFIED. THERE WAS NO SUSPICION, NOT A HINT OF IT HAD REACHED THEY FALSIFIED. THERE WAS DUET THAT LADY TRISTRAM OFTEN FORCOT THE WHOLE AFFAIR, HER SON WATCHED ALWAYS, HIS EYES KEEN FOR A SIGHT, HIS EAR DOWN TO THE EARTH FOR A SOUND, OF DANGER. NO SECURITY RELAXED HIS VIGILANCE, BUT HIS VIGILANCE BECAME SO HABITUAL, SO ENTERED INTO HIM, THAT HIS MOTHER CEASED TO NOTICE IT AND IT BECAME A SECOND NATURE TO HIMSELF. THAT IT MIGHT MISS NOTHING, IT WAS UNVERSAL; THE MEREST STRANGER CAME WITHIN TIS KEN. HE WATCHED ALL MANKIND LEST SOME ONE

RIGHT AND JUSTICE WERE ON HIS SIDE. THAT HE WAS NOT MERELY JUSTIFIED IN

Cholderton's Imp had not used her eyes in vain; but Harry's neighbors, CONTENT TO CALL HIM RESERVED, HAD NO IDEA THAT THERE WAS ANYTHING IN particular that he had to hide.

THERE WAS ONE LITTLE POINT WHICH, EXCEPT FOR HIS PERSUASION OF HIS OWN RECTITIONE, MICHIT HAVE SEEMED TO INDICATE AN UNEASY CONSCIENCE, BUT WAS IN FACT ONLY EVIDENCE OF A NATURAL DISLIKE TO HAVING AN UNMELCOME SUBJECT THRUST UNDER HIS NOTICE. ABOUT A YEAR AFTER THE DISCLOSURE LADY

TRISTRAM HAD A LETTER FROM MR GAINSBOROUGH. THIS GENTLEMAN HAD MARRIED HER COUSIN, AND THE COUSIN, A WOMAN OF SEVERE FRINCIPLES, HAD RUT AN BIND TO ALL ACQUAINTANCE IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE "ODYSSEY." SHE WAS DEAD, AND HER HUSBAND PROPOSED TO RENEW PRIENDLY RELATIONS, SAYING THAT HIS DAUGHTER KNEW NOTHING OF PAST DIFFERENCES AND WAS

ANXIOUS TO SEE HER KINSFOLK. THE LETTER WAS ALMOST GUSHING, AND LADY TRISTRAM, LEFT TO HERSELF, WOULD HAVE ANSWERED IT IN THE SAME KIND; FOR WHILE SHE HAD PLEASED HERSELF SHE BORE NO RESENTIMENT AGAINST FOLK WHO HAD BLAMED HER MOREOVER GAINSBOROUGH WAS POOR AND

SOMEBOOK HAD TOLD HER THAT THE GIRL WAS REASANT, SHE PITED POVERTY and liked being kind to pleasant people.

"Never." He said. "They shall never come here. I don't want to know THEM, I WON'T SEE THEM." HIS FACE WAS HARD, ANGRY, AND EVEN OUTRAGED at the notion HIS MOTHER SAID NO MORE. IF THE BARONY AND BLENT DEPARTED FROM HARRY. ON LADY TRISTRAMS DEATH THEY WOULD GO TO CECILY GAINSBOROUGH. IF HARRY HAD HIS WAY, THAT GIRL SHOULD NOT EVEN SEE HIS DARLING BLENT. IF DISTRUST OF HIS MOTHER ENTERED AT ALL. INTO HIS DECISION, IF HE FEARED ANY INDISCREET TALK FROM HER. HE GAVE NO HINT OF IT. IT WAS ENOUGH THAT THE GIRL HAD SOME ODIQUIS PRETENSIONS WHICH HE COULD AND WOULD DETERAT.

"Shall we invite them to stay for a week or two?" she had asked.

BUT COULD NOT IGNORE—PRETENSIONS FOR HIS MIND. IN HER OWN SHE HAD none. THE SUN HAD SUNK BEHIND THE TOWER, AND LADY TRISTRAM SAT IN A LOW CHAIR BY THE RIVER. BUILDYING THE COOL OF THE EVENING. THE BLENT

MURMURED AS IT RAN: THE FISHES WERE FEEDING: THE MIDGES WERE OUT TO FEED, BUT THEY DID NOT BITE LADY TRISTRAM; THEY NEVER DID: THE FACT HAD ALWAYS BEEN A COMFORT TO HER. AND MAY PERHAPS BE ALLOWED HERE TO

assume a mildly allegorical meaning. If the cool of the evening may do THE SAME, IT WILL SERVE VERY WELL TO EXPRESS THE STAGE OF LIFE AND OF FEELING TO WHICH NO MORE THAN THE BEGINNING OF MIDDLE AGE HAD BROUGHT HER. IT WAS RATHER ABSURD, BUT SHE DID NOT WANT TO DO OR FEEL.

VERY MUCH MORE, AND IT SEEMED AS THOUGH HER WISHES WERE TO BE RESPECTED. A CERTAIN DISTANCE FROM THINGS MARKED HER NOW: ONLY HARRY AND WISHED TO GO ON BEING THAT TO THE END; FORTUNATELY FRAGILITY HAD always been her style and always suited her.

WAS NEAR TO HER. ONLY HARRY'S TRIUMPH WAS VERY IMPORTANT. SHE HAD OUTRUN HER VITAL INCOME AND MORTGAGED FUTURE YEARS: IF FOREOLOSURE THREATENED. SHE MAINTAINED HER OLD POWER OF TAKING NO HEED OF DISAGREEABLE THINGS. HOWEVER IMMINENT. SHE WAS STILL VERY HANDSOME

HARRY LEANT HIS ELBOW ON A GREAT STONE VASE WHICH STOOD ON A

pedestal and held a miniature wilderness of flowers.

"I LUNCHED AT FAIRHOLME," HE WAS SAYING. "THE PAINT'S ALL WET STILL, OF COURSE, AND THE DOORS STICK A BIT, BUT I LIKED THE FAMILY. HE'S CENUNE, she's homely, and Janie's a good girl. They were very civil."

"I SUDDOSE SO."

impression which yet might reasonably have arisen.
"I DDN'T MEAN THAT. I'VE MET MR IVER, AND HE WASN'T AT ALL OVERWHELMED.

"Not overwhelmed." He added, as though wishing to correct a wrong

Mrs Iver was—out—when I called, and I was—out—when she called." Lady Tristram was visibly, although not ostentatiously, allowing for the prejudices of a moral middle-class.

"Young Bos Broadley was there—you know who I mean? At Mingham Farm, up above the Pool."
"I know—a handsome voung man."

"I FORGOT HE WAS HANDSOME OF COURSE YOU KNOW HIM THEN! WHAT A PITY

I'm not handsome, mother!"
"OH, YOU'VE THE AIR, THOUGH," SHE OBSERVED CONTENTEDLY. "IS HE AFTER

Janie Iver?"
"So I Iwagne. I'm not sure that I'm not too. Have I any chance against

She did not seem to take him seriously.

Bob Broadley?"

one did not seem to take min senously.

"They wouldn't look at Mr Broadley." (She was rleasantly punctilious about all titles and courteous methods of reference or address.)
"Janie Iver's a great heiress."

"And what about ME?" He insisted, as he lit his PIPE and sat down opposite her.

"There's no reason why I shouldn't marry, is there?" "Why, you must marry, of course, But----" "We can do the blue blood business enough for both." "Yes. I didn't mean that." "You mean—am Lat all in love with her?" "No. NOT QUITE. OH. MY DEAR HARRY. I MEAN WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO BE IN LOVE A LITTLE WITH SOMEBODY? YOU COULD DO IT AFTER YOU MARRY, OF COURSE, AND YOU CERTAINLY WILL IF YOU MARRY NOW. BUT IT'S NOT SO-SO. COMFORTABLE." SHE LOOKED AT HIM WITH A SORT OF PITY: HER FEELING WAS that he gave himself no holidays. HE SAT SILENT A MOMENT SEEMING TO CONSIDER SOME PICTURE WHICH HER suggestion conjured up. "No good waiting for that," was his conclusion, "Somehow if I married and had children, it would seem to make everything more settled." His GREAT PRE-COCLIPATION WAS ON HIM AGAIN. "WE COULD DO WITH SOME MORE MONEY TOO." HE ADDED. "AND. AS I SAY. I'M INCLINED TO LIKE THE girl." "What's she like?" "What you call a fine girl—tall—well made——" "She'll be fat some day. I expect." "STRAIGHT FEATURES. BROADISH FACE, DARK, RATHER HEAVY BROWS—YOU

"You mean it. Harry?"

know the sort of thing."

"Oh. Harry. I hate all that!"

Blent," he went on a moment later. "Mortgage Blent? What for?" HE RAISED A HAND TO ASK TO BE HEARD OUT. "BUT I SHOULD LIKE TO FEEL THAT I COLLD AT ANY MOMENT LAY MY HAND ON A RIGHTMP OF READY MONEY—SAY

"I DON'T: I RATHER LIKE IT." HE WAS SMOKING MEDITATIVELY. AND JERKED OUT WHAT HE HAD TO SAY BETWEEN THE PLEES. "I SHOULDN'T LIKE TO MORTCAGE

FIFTY, OR EVEN A HUNDRED, THOUSAND POUNDS, I SHOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO PULL IT OUT OF MY BREECHES' POCKET AND SAY, 'TAKE THAT AND HOLD YOUR tongue!" He looked at her to see if she followed what was in his mind.

"I THINK THEY'D TAKE IT." HE ENDED. "I MEAN IF THINGS GOT AS FAR AS THAT. vou know." "You mean the Gainsboroughs?"

"YES OH ANYBODY FLSE WOULD BE CHEAPER THAN THAT. FIFTY THOUSAND WOLLD BE BETTER THAN A VERY DOLBTELL CASE. BUT IT WOLLD HAVE TO BE DONE DIRECTLY—BEFORE A WORD WAS HEARD ABOUT IT. I SHOULD LIKE TO LIVE with the check by me."

HE SPOKE VERY SIMPLY. AS ANOTHER MAN MIGHT SPEAK OF BEING READY TO MEET AN IMPROVEMENT-RATE OR AN APPLICATION FROM AN IMPECUNOUS

brother. "DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD PRECAUTION?" HE ASKED. WHETHER HE MEANT THE MARRIAGE. THE CHECK, OR THE LADY, WAS IMMATERIAL: IT

came to the same thing. "It's all very troublesome," Lady Tristram complained. "It really half

spoils our lives, doesn't it, Harry? One always has to be worrying."

THE SMLE WHOSE MOVEMENTS HAD EXCITED MINA ZABRISKA'S INTEREST.

MADE ITS APPEARANCE ON HARRY'S FACE. HE HAD NEVER BEEN ANNOYED BY HIS MOTHER'S EXTERNAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE RESULT OF HER OWN DOINGS. BUT

he was often amused at it.

"Why do you smile?" she asked innocently. "Well, worrying's a mild term," He explained evasively, "It's my work in the world, you know—or it seems as if it was going to be." "YOU'D BETTER THINK ABOUT IT." LADY TRISTRAM CONCLUDED, NOT WISHING TO THINK ABOUT IT ANY MORE HERSELF. "YOU WOULDN'T TELL MR IVER ANYTHING ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY, WOULD YOU?" "THE DIFFICULTY" HAD BECOME HER USUAL way of referring to their secret. "NOT A WORD. I'M NOT CALLED UPON TO JUSTIFY MY POSITION TO IVER." NO SHADOW OF DOUBT SOFTENED THE CLEARNESS OF HARRY'S CONVICTION ON THIS point. HE ROSE. FILLED HIS PIPE AGAIN. AND BEGAN TO WALK UP AND DOWN. HE WAS AT HIS OLD GAME. COUNTING CHANCES. ONE BY ONE. EVERY CHANCE. trying to eliminate risks, one by one, every risk, so that at last he might TAKE HIS EASE AND SAY WITHOUT FEAR OF CONTRADICTION. "HERE SITS TRISTRAM OF BLENT." TO BE THUS WAS—SOMETHING: BUT TO BE SAFELY THUS WAS SO MUCH MORE THAT IT DID NOT SEEM TO HIM A GREAT THING TO CARRY OUT THE PLAN WHICH HE HAD SUGGESTED TO LADY TRISTRAM. TO BE SURE, HE

WAS NOT IN LOVE WITH ANYBODY BLSE. WHICH MAKES A DIFFERENCE. THOUGH IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER IT WOULD HAVE MADE ANY TO HIM. HAD THE QUESTION ARISBN AT THAT MOMENT HE WOULD HAVE SAID THAT NOTHING COULD MAKE any difference. "DID YOU GO UP TO THE LODGE, HARRY?" HIS MOTHER CALLED TO HIM AS ONE

of his turns brought him near her. "OH, YES; I FORGOT TO TELL YOU. I DID, AND I FOUND MADAME ZABRISKA

HAVING A LOOK AT US FROM THE TERRACE, SO I HAD A LITTLE TALK WITH HER. I didn't see the uncle."

"What's she like?" This was a favorite question of Lady Tristram's. Harry paused a moment, looking for a description.

"WELL. IF YOU CAN IMAGINE ONE NEEDLE WITH TWO VERY LARGE EYES. YOU'D GET SOME IDEA OF HER. SHE'S SHARP, MOTHER-MIND AND BODY, PLEASANT ENOUGH THOUGH. SHE'S COMING TO SEE YOU, SO YOU NEEDN'T BOTHER TO GO UP." HE ADDED WITH AN AIR OF IMPATIBNCE, "SHE'S BEEN HUNTING IN THE Peerage." "Of course she would: there's nothing in that." "No, I suppose not," he admitted almost reluctantly. "I can't help thinking I've heard the name before—not Zabriska, but the uncle's " "Duplay, isn't it? I never heard it." "WELL. I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT IT. BUT IT SOUNDS FAMILIAR. I'M CONFUSING IT WITH SOMETHING BLSE. I SUPPOSE. THEY LOOK LIKE BEING endurable, do they?" "Oh, yes, as people go," he answered, resuming his walk. IE A DETERMINATION TO KEEP FOR YOURSELE WHAT ACCORDING TO YOUR OWN. CONVICTION BELONGS BY LAW TO ANOTHER MAKES A CRIMINAL INTENT-AND THAT IRRESPECTIVE OF THE MERITS OF THE LAW-IT WOULD BE HARD TO AVOID CLASSING LADY TRISTRAM AND HER SON AS CRIMINALS IN CONTEMPLATION, IF NOT YET IN ACTION AND SO CONSIDERED THEY AFFORDED EXCELLENT SPECIMENS OF TWO KINDS OF CRIMINALS WHICH A STUDY OF ASSIZE COURTS REVEALS—THE CRIMINAL WHO DRIFTS AND THE CRIMINAL WHO PLANS: THE former usually termed by counsel and judge "unhappy," the latter more STERNLY DUBBED "DANGEROUS." LADY TRISTRAM HAD ALWAYS DRIFTED AND WAS DRIFTING STILL; HARRY HAD BEGUN TO PLAN AT FIFTEEN AND STILL WAS BUSY PLANNING. ONE RESULT OF THIS DIFFERENCE WAS THAT WHEREAS SHE WAS HARDLY TOUCHED OR AFFECTED IN CHARACTER HE HAD BEEN IMMENSELY INFLUENCED. IN HER AND TO HER THE WHOLE THING SEEMED ALMOST ACCIDENTAL, A WORRY, AS SHE PUT IT, AND NOT MUCH MORE, WITH HIM IT WAS THE GOVERNING FACT IN LIFE, AND HAD BEEN THE FORCE MOST POTENT IN

MOULDING HIM. THE TROUBLE CAME INTO HER HEAD WHEN SOMETHING FROM OUTSIDE BUT IT THERE IT NEVER LEET HIS BRAIN. AND SHE HAD NO ADEQUATE CONCEPTION OF WHAT IT WAS TO HIM. EVEN HIS SCHEME OF MARRYING JANIE IVER AND HIS VIVID LITTLE PHRASE ABOUT LIVING WITH THE CHECK BY HIM FAILED TO BRING IT HOME TO HER. THIS VERY EVENING, AS SOON AS HE WAS OUT OF SIGHT, BOTH HE AND HIS GREAT QUESTION WERE OUT OF THE MIND OF THE WOMAN WHO HAD BROUGHT BOTH HIM AND IT INTO EXISTENCE. THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CARRY THE DOCTRINE OF FREE-WILL SO FAR IN THEIR OWN PERSONS AS TO TAKE THE LIBERTY OF DECLINING TO ALLOW CAUSES TO WORK ON AND IN THEM, WHAT ARE LOGICALLY, MORALLY, AND ON EVERY OTHER GROUND CONCEIVABLE. THEIR NECESSARY FEFFCTS: REASONING FROM WHAT THEY HAVE DONE TO WHAT THEY MUST BE FROM WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR TO WHAT THEY MUST FEEL, BREAKS DOWN: THEY ARE ARBITRARY, UNCONDITIONED. THEMSELVES AS IT WERE ACCIDENTAL. WITH THIS COMES A SORT OF INNOCENCE. SOMETIMES ATTRACTIVE. SOMETIMES UNCOMMONLY exasperating to the normal man. SO LADY TRISTRAM WENT BACK TO HER NOVEL, AND HARRY WALKED BY THE RIVER, MOODILY MEDITATING AND BUSILY SCHEMING. MEANWHILE MINA ZABRISKA HAD FLOWN TO THE LIBRARY AT MERRION LODGE, AND, FINDING BOOKS THAT HAD BELONGED TO A LEGAL MEMBER OF THE FAMILY IN DAYS GONE BY. WAS BNGAGED IN STUDYING THE LAW RELATING TO THE SUCCESSION TO LANDS AND TITLES IN ENGLAND. SHE DID NOT MAKE QUICK PROGRESS. NEVERTHELESS IN A DAY OR TWO SHE HAD REACHED A POINT WHEN SHE WAS BUBBLING OVER WITH CURIOSITY AND EXCITEMENT: SHE FELT THAT SHE COULD NOT GO ON SITTING OPPOSITE MAJOR DUPLAY AT MEALS WITHOUT GIVING HIM AT LEAST A HINT OR TWO OF THE WONDERFUL STATE OF THINGS ON WHICH SHE HAD HIT. AND WITHOUT ASKING HIM TO CONSIDER THE FACTS AND TO HAVE A LOOK AT THE BOOKS WHICH WERE SO PUZZLING AND EXERCISING HER BRAIN. YET HARRY TRISTRAM. WARY SENTINEL AS HE WAS. DID NOT DREAM OF ANY ATTACK OR SCENT ANY DANGER FROM THE NEEDLE WITH TWO VERY LARGE EYES, AS HE HAD CALLED THE lady at Merrion Lodge.



IV

She Could an' She Would

IN SPITE OF MRS IVER'S SECRET OPINION THAT PEOPLE WITH STRANGE NAMES WERE LIKELY TO BE STRANGE THEMSELVES. AND THAT, FOR ALL SHE SAW. FOREIGNERS WERE-NOT FOOLS. AS DR JOHNSON'S FRIEND THOUGHT-BUT GENERALLY KNAVES. AN ACQUAINTANCE WAS SOON MADE BETWEEN FAIRHOLME AND MERRON LODGE. HER FAMILY WAS AGAINST MRS IVER: HER HUSBAND WAS BOUNDLESSLY HOSPITABLE. JANIE WAS VERY SOCIABLE. THE FRIENDSHIP CREW AND PROSPERED. MR IVER BEGAN TO TEACH THE MAJOR TO PLAY GOLE, JANIE TOOK MINA ZABRISKA OLIT DRIVING IN THE HIGHEST DOG-CART ON THE COUNTRYSIDE. THEY WOULD GO ALONG THE ROAD BY THE RIVER, AND GET OUT PERHAPS FOR A WANDER BY THE POOL. OR EVEN DRIVE HIGHER UP THE VALLEY AND DEWAND TEA FROM BOB BROADLEY AT HIS PLEASANT LITTLE PLACE —HALE FARM HALE MANOR-HOUSE—AT MINCHAM THREE MLES ABOVE THE POOL MATTERS MOVED SO QUICK THAT MINA LINDERSTOOD IN A WIFEK WHY JANIE FOUND IT PLEASANT TO HAVE A COMPANION UNDER WHOSE ÆGIS SHE COULD DROP IN AT MINGHAM; IN LITTLE MORE THAN A FORTNIGHT SHE BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND WHY HER YOUTHFUL UNCLE (THE MAJOR WAS VERY YOUNG NOW) GRUNTED UNSYMPATHETICALLY WHEN SHE OBSERVED THAT THE ROAD TO MINGHAM WAS THE PRETTIEST IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD. THE IMP WAS ACCUMULATING OTHER PEOPLE'S SECRETS. AND WAS ACCORDINGLY IN A STATE of high satisfaction.

The situation developed fast, and for the time at least Jane Iver was Heroine and held the centre of the stage. A chance of that state of Comfort which was his remaining and modest ambition had opened Before the Major—and the possibility of sharing it with a consenal PARTNER: THE MAJOR WASTED NO TIME IN STARTING HIS CAMPAIGN. OVERTURES FROM BLENT, MORE STATELY BUT NONE THE LESS PROMPT, SHOWED THAT HARRY TRISTRAM HAD NOT SPOKEN IDLY TO HIS MOTHER. AND WHAT ABOUT BOB BROADLEY? HE SEEMED TO BE OUT OF THE RUNNING. AND INDEED TO HAVE LITTLE INCLINATION OR NOT ENOUGH COURAGE TO PRESS FORWARD. YET THE DRIVES TO MINGHAM WENT ON MINA WAS PLEZI ED. SHE BEGAN TO OBSERVE THE CURRENTS IN THE FAIRHOUME HOUSEHOLD. IVER WAS FOR HARRY, SHE THOUGHT, THOUGH HE MAINTAINED A DIGNFIED SHOW OF INDIFFERENCE MRS IVER—THE MIRACULOUS OCCURRING IN A FORTNIGHT. AS IT OFTEN DOES—WAS AT LEAST VERY MUCH TAKEN WITH THE MAJOR. BOB BROADLEY HAD NO FRIEND, UNI ESS IN JANIE HERSELE. AND JANIE WAS INSCRUTABLE BY VIRTUE OF AN OPEN PLEASURE IN THE ATTENTION OF ALL THREE GENTLEMEN AND AN OBVIOUS DISINGLINATION TO DEVOTE HERSELF EXCLUSIVELY TO ANY ONE OF THEM. SHE COULD NOT FLIRT WITH HARRY TRISTRAM, BECAUSE HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE ART, BUT SHE ACCEPTED HIS SIGNIFICANT CIVILITIES. SHE DID FLIRT WITH THE MAJOR, WHO HAD MANY YEARS' EXPERIENCE OF THE PASTIME, AND SHE WAS KIND TO BOB BROADLEY, GOING TO SEE HIM, AS HAS BEEN SAID, SENDING

HARD TO HELP A MAN WHO WILL NOT HELP HIMSELF; ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS said to be amusing sometimes.

THEY ALL MET AT FAIRHOLME ONE AFTERNOON, HARRY APPEARING UNEXPECTEDLY AS THE REST WERE AT TEA ON THE LAWN. THIS WAS HIS FIRST MEETING WITH THE MAJOR. AS HE GREETED THAT GENTILEWAN, EVEN MORE

HIM INVITATIONS, AND SEEMING IN SOME WAY TO BE FIGHTING AGAINST HIS
OWN READINESS TO GIVE UP THE BATTLE BEFORE IT WAS WITLL BEGLIN. BUT IT IS

WHEN HE SHOOK HANDS WITH BOB, THERE WAS A TOUCH OF REGALITY IN HIS manner; the reserve was prominent, and his prerogative was claimed. VERY SOON HE CARRIED JANE OFF FOR A SOLITARY WALK IN THE SHRUBBERES. MINA BRUOYED HER UNCLE'S FROWN AND CHAFED AT BOB'S SHLF-EFFACEMENT; HE HAD BEEN TALKING TO JANE WHEN HARRY CALMLY TOOK HER AWAY. THE PAIR WHEE GONE HALF AN HOUR. AND CONVERSATION FLAGGED. THEY

REAFFEARED, JANE LOOKING RATHER EXCITED, HARRY ALMOST INSOLENTLY CALM, AND SAT DOWN SIDE BY SIDE. THE MAJOR WALKED ACROSS AND TOOK A VACANT SEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF JANE. THE SLIGHTEST LOOK OF SURPRISE

SIDE WERE A STRONGER SUGGESTION OF POWER AND AN ASSUMPTION. RATHER ATTRACTIVE. THAT HE MUST BE LISTENED TO. JANIE LIKED THIS AIR OF HIS. EVEN WHILE SHE RESENTED IT: HERE, IN HIS OWN COUNTY AT LEAST, A TRISTRAM OF BLENT WAS SOMERODY, BOB BROADLEY WAS LISTENING TO IVER'S VIEWS ON LOCAL AFFAIRS: HE WAS NOT IN THE FIGHT AT ALL. BUT HE WAS COVERTLY WATCHING IT. PERHAPS IVER WATCHED TOO, BUT IT WAS NOT EASY TO PENETRATE THE THOUGHTS OF THAT ASTUTE MAN OF BUSINESS. THE FORTUNE OF BATTLE SEEMED. TO INCLINE TO HARRY'S SIDE: THE MAJOR WAS LEFT OUT OF THE TALK FOR MINUTES. TOGETHER. MORE FOR FUN THAN FROM ANY LOYALTY TO HER KINSWAN, MINA ROSE and walked over to Harry. "Do take me to see the greenhouses. Mr Tristram." she begged. "You're all right with uncle, aren't you, Janie?" JANIE NODDED RATHER NERVOUSLY. AFTER A PAUSE OF A FULL HALF-MINUTE. HARRY TRISTRAM ROSE WITHOUT A WORD AND BEGAN TO WALK OFF; IT WAS LEFT for Mina to join him in a hurried little run. "Oh, wait for me, anyhow," she cried, with a laugh. They walked on some way in silence. "YOU'RE NOT VERY CONVERSATIONAL. MR TRISTRAM, I SUPPOSE YOU'RE ANGRY with me?" HE TURNED AND LOOKED AT HER. PRESENTLY HE BEGAN TO SMILE, EVEN MORE slowly, it seemed, than usual. "I MUST SEE THAT MY POOR UNCLE HAS FAIR PLAY—WHAT DO YOU CALL IT?—A fair show—mustn't I?" "OH, THAT'S WHAT YOU MEANT, MADAME ZABRISKA? IT WASN'T THE PLEASURE of my company?"

"Do you know. I think you rather exaggerate the Pleasure—no. Not the

SHOWED ON HARRY TRISTRAM'S FACE. A DUEL BEGAN. DUPLAY HAD READINESS SUAVITY VOLUBILITY A TRICK OF BLATTERING DEFERENCE ON HARRY'S PLEASURE, I MEAN THE HONOR—OF YOUR COMPANY? YOU WERE LOOKING AS IF YOU COLL DN'T LINDERSTAND HOW ANYBODY COLL D WANT TO TALK TO LIND E WHEN YOU WERE THERE. BUT HE'S BETTER-LOOKING THAN YOU ARE, AND MUCH MORE amusina." "I DON'T SET UP FOR A BEAUTY OR A WIT BITHER." HARRY OBSERVED, NOT AT ALL

"NO-AND STILL SHE OUGHT TO WANT TO TALK TO YOU! WHY? BECAUSE YOU'RE Mr Tristram, I suppose?" Mina indulged in a very scornful demeanor.

"It's very friendly of you to resent my behavior on Miss Iver's behalf."

"THERE YOU ARE AGAIN! THAT MEANS SHE DOESN'T RESENT IT! I THINK YOU give yourself airs. Mr Tristram, and I should like---"

"To take me down a peg?" He asked. In a tone of rather contemptuous amusement.

She paused a minute, and then nodded significantly.

"EXACTLY: AND TO MAKE YOU FEEL A LITTLE UNCOMFORTABLE—NOT QUITE SO.

SURE OF YOURSELF AND EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU." AGAIN SHE WAITED A MINUTE. HER EYES SET ON HIS FACE AND WATCHING IT KEENLY. "I WONDER IF I could." she ended slowly.

"Upon my word. I don't see how it's to be done." He was openly chaffing her now. "Oh. I DON'T KNOW THAT YOU'RE INVULNERABLE." SHE SAID. WITH A TOSS OF HER

HEAD. "DON'T DEFY ME. MR. TRISTRAM. I DON'T MND TELLING YOU THAT IT WOULD. be very good for you if you weren't----"

"Appreciated?" he suggested ironically.

Tristram of Blent."

put out by the Imp's premeditated candor.

"No: I was going to say if you weren't Mr Tristram, or the future Lord

quiver passed over his face as he remarked:
"I'm AFRAID PROVIDENCE CAN HARDLY MANAGE THAT NOW, EITHER FOR MY
GOOD OR FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT, MADAME ZABRISKA, MUCH AS IT MIGHT

IF SHE HAD HOPED TO CATCH HIM OFF HIS GUARD, SHE WAS MISTAKEN, NOT A

conduce to both."

THE IMP LOVED FIGHTING, AND HER BLOOD WAS GETTING UP. HE WAS A GOOD

The IMP LOVED FIGHTING, AND HER BLOOD WAS GETTING UP. HE WAS A GOOD FOE, BUT HE DID NOT KNOW HER POWER. HE MUST NOT ETHER—NOT YET, ANYHOW. IF HE PATRONZED HER MUCH MORE, SHE BEGAN TO FEEL THAT HE

WOULD HAVE TO KNOW IT SOME DAY—NOT TO HIS HURT, OF COURSE, MERELY FOR the reformation of his manners.

"MEANWHILE," HE CONTINUED, AS HE LIT A CIGARETTE, "I'M NOT SERIOUSLY DISAPPOINTED THAT ATTENTIONS PAID TO ONE LADY FAIL TO PLEASE ANOTHER.

That's not uncommon, you know. By the way, we're not on the faith to the greenhouses; But you bon't mind that? They were a pretext, no boubt? Oh, I bon't want to hurry back. Your uncle shall have his fair show. How well you're mastering English!"

AT THIS MOMENT MINA HATED HIM HEARTILY; SHE SWORE TO HUMBLE HIM—BEFORE HERSELF, NOT BEFORE THE WORLD, OF COURSE, SHE WOULD GIVE HIM A FRIGHT ANYHOW—NOT NOW, BUT SOME DAY; IF HER TEMPER COULD NOT STAND the strain better, it would be some day soon, though.

"You see," Harry's calm exasperating voice went on, "it's just possible that you're better placed at present as an observer of our manners than as a critic of them. I hope I don't exceed the limits of candor which you yourself indicated as allowable in this pleasant conversation of ours?"

conversation of ours?"
"OH WELL, WE SHALL SEE," SHE DECLARED, WITH ANOTHER NOO. THE VAGUE
THREAT (FOR IT SEEMED THAT OR NOTHING) BLOTTED A LOW LAUGH FROM HARRY

Tristram.
"We shall." He said. "And in the Meantine a little sparring is amusing

MINA DID NOT CONFESS. BUT SHE FELT THE HIT ALL THE SAME IF SHE WERE TO fight him, she must bring her reserves into action. "BY THE WAY. I'M SO SORRY YOU COULDN'T SEE MY MOTHER WHEN YOU CALLED

ENOUGH, I DON'T CONFESS TO A HIT AT PRESENT: DO YOU. MADAME

7ahriska?"

THE OTHER DAY, SHE'S NOT AT ALL WELL, UNHAPPLY, SHE REALLY WANTS TO SEE vou." "How very kind of Lady Tristram!" There was kept for the mother a LITTLE OF THE SARCASTIC HUMLITY WHICH WAS MORE APPROPRIATE WHEN

DIRECTED AGAINST THE SON. HARRY SMLED STILL AS HE TURNED ROUND AND BEGAN TO ESCORT HER BACK TO THE LAWN. THE SMILE ANNOYED MINA: IT WAS a smile of victory. Well, the victory should not be altogether his.

"I WANT TO SEE LADY TRISTRAM VERY MUCH." SHE WENT ON, IN INNOCENT tones and with a face devoid of malice, "because I can't help thinking I must have seen her before—when I was quite a little girl." "You've seen my mother before? When and where?"

"She was Mrs Fitzhubert, wasn't she?" "Yes, of course she was-before she came into the title."

"WELL. A MRS FITZHUBERT USED TO COME AND SEE MY MOTHER LONG AGO AT Heidelberg. Do you know if your mother was ever at Heidelberg?" "I fancy she was—I'm not sure."

STILL THE IMP WAS VERY INNOCENT, ALTHOUGH THE FORM OF HARRY'S REPLY caused her inward amusement and triumph.

"My MOTHER WAS MADAME DE KRIES. ASK LADY TRISTRAM IF SHE

remembers the name." IT WAS A HIT FOR HER AT LAST, THOUGH HARRY TOOK IT WILL. HE TURNED QUICKLY TOWARD HER, OPENED HIS LIPS TO SPEAK, REPENTED, AND DID NO MORE THAN GIVE HER A RATHER LONG AND RATHER INTENSE LOOK. THEN HE NODDED CARELESSLY. "ALL RIGHT, I"LL ASK HER," SAID HE. THE NEXT MOMENT HE RUT A QUESTION. "DID YOU KNOW ABOUT HAVING MET HER BEFORE YOU CAME TO Merrion?"

"OH WELL, I LOOKED IN THE 'PEERAGE,' BUT IT REALLY DIDN'T STRIKE ME TILL A DAY OR TWO AGO THAT IT MIGHT BE THE SAME MIRS FITZHUBERT. THE NAME'S DIFETTY COMMON, ISN'T IT?"

"OH, I DIDN'T KNOW," MURMURED MINA APOLOGETICALLY; BUT THE GLANCE WHICH FOLLOWED HIM AS HE TURNED AWAY WAS NOT APOLOGETIC; IT WAS triumphant.

SHE GOT BACK IN TIME TO WITNESS—TO HER REGRET (LET IT BE CONFESSED)
SHE COULD NOT OVERHEAR—JANE'S FAREWELL TO BOB BROADLEY. THEY HAD
BEEN FRIENDS FROM YOUTH; HE WAS "BOB" TO HER, SHE WAS NOW TO HIM
"Miss Janie."

"You haven't said a word to me, Bob."
"I haven't had a chance; you're always with the swells now."
"How can I help it. if—if nobody else comes?"

"I REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE THE CHEEK. HARRY TRISTRAM WAS SAVAGE ENOUGH with the Major—what would he have been with me?"
"Why should it matter what he was?"

"Do you really think that, Miss Janie?" Bob was almost at the point of an advance.

The explanation checked the advance.

"I mean—why should it matter to you?"

"No. it's very uncommon."

"OH. I—I SEE, I DON'T KNOW, I'M SURE, WELL THEN, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DEAL with him " "Well, good-by,"

"Good-bv. Miss Janie."

"Will you really?"

"Are you coming to see us again, ever?"

"If you ask me. ——"

"And am I coming again to Mingham? Although you don't ask me."

"Oh. vou do ask me? When I ask vou to ask me!"

"Anv dav vou'll----" "No. I'll surprise vou. Good-by. Good-by really."

THE CONVERSATION, IT MUST BE ADMITTED, SOUNDS COMMONPLACE WHEN VERBALLY RECORDED. YET HE WOULD BE A DESPONDENT MAN WHO CONSIDERED IT ALTOGETHER DISCOURAGING: MINA DID NOT THINK JANIËS

GLANCES DISCOURAGING EITHER, BUT BOB BROADLEY, A LITTERAL MAN, FOUND

NO WARRANT FOR FRESH HOPE IN ANY OF THE NOT VERY SIGNIFICANT WORDS WHICH HE REPEATED TO HIMSELF AS HE RODE HOME UP THE VALLEY OF THE BLENT. HE SUFFERED UNDER MODESTY: IT NEEDED MORE THAN COQUETRY TO CONVINCE

HIM THAT HE EXERCISED ANY ATTRACTION OVER THE RICH AND BRILLIANT (BRILLIANCE ALSO IS A MATTER OF COMPARISON) MISS IVER. ON WHOSE FAVOR

MR TRISTRAM WAITED AND AT WHOSE SIDE MAJOR DUPLAY DANCED attendance.

"You're a dreadful flirt, Janie," said Mina, as she kissed her friend.

JANIE WAS NOT A RAW GIRL: SHE WAS A CAPABLE YOUNG WOMAN OF TWOand-twenty.

"Nonsense." She said rather crossly. "It's not flirting to take time to make up vour mind." "It looks like it. though." "AND I'VE NO REASON TO SUPPOSE THEY'VE ANY ONE OF THEM MADE UP THEIR minds."

"I SHOULD THINK YOU COULD DO THAT FOR THEM PRETTY SOON, BESIDES, UNCLE has, anvhow." "I'm to be vour aunt, am I?"

"Yes. I think that's true. Shall we have a drive soon?" "To Mingham? Or to Blent Hall?"

"Oh. he's only an uncle by accident."

"Not Blent. I wait my lord's pleasure to see me."

"Yes, that's just how I feel about him," cried Mina eagerly.

"But all the same——"

"No. I won't hear a word of good about him. I hate him!"

JANE SMLED IN AN INDULGENT BUT RATHER TROUBLED WAY. HER PROBLEM WAS SERIOUS: SHE COULD NOT AFFORD THE IMP'S PETTISH TREATMENT OF THE WORLD.

AND THE PEOPLE IN IT. JANIE HAD RESPONSIBILITIES—BANKS AND BUILDINGS. FULL OF THEM—AND A HEART TO PLEASE INTO THE BARGAIN. SINGULARLY COMPLICATED QUESTIONS ARE RATHER CRUELLY PUT BEFORE YOUNG WOMEN.

WHO MUST SOLVE THEM ON PERIL OF —— IT WOULD SOUND LIKE EXAGGERATION to say what. THERE WAS MRS IVER TO BE SAID GOOD-BY TO-PLUMP, PEACEFUL, PROPER

MRS IVER. WHOM NOTHING HAD GREAT POWER TO STIR SAVE AN UNKINDNESS.

AND AN UNCONVENTIONALITY: BEFORE EITHER OF THESE SHE BRISTLED

"I hope you've all enjoyed this lovely afternoon," she said to Mina.

"Oh. ves. we have. Mrs Iver—not quite equally perhaps, but still——"

Mrs Iver sighed and kissed her.

"Men are always the difficulty, aren't they?" said the Imp.

surprisinaly.

"Poor child, and you've lost yours!"

"Yes. Poor About!" There was a touch of buty in Mina's sigh. She had

BEEN FOND OF A DOLF. BUT HIS MEWORY WAS NOT A CONSTANT PRESENCE. THE

world for the living was Madame Zabriska's view.
"I'm so glad Janie's found a friend in you—and a wise one. I'm sure."

Mina did her best to Look the part thus charitably assigned to her, her

glance at Janie was matronly, almost maternal.

"Not that I know anything about it," Mrs Iver Pursued, Following a train of thought obvious enough. "I hore she'll act for her harpiness, that's all. There's the dear Major Looking for You—don't keep him wating, dear. How lucky he's your uncle—he can always be with you."

"Until he settles and makes a home for himself," smiled Mina irrepressibly; the rejuvenescence—nay, the unbroken youth—of her relative appeared to her quantily humorous, and it was her fancy to refer to him as she might to a younger brother.

There was Mr Iver to be said good-by to.

"Come again soon—you're always weloome, you wake us up, Madame Zabriska"

"You promised to sav Mina!"

"So I DID. BUT MY TONGUE'S OUT OF PRACTICE WITH YOUNG LADIES' CHRISTIAN NAMES. WHY. I CALL MY WIFE 'MOTHER'—ONLY JAME SAYS I MUSTN'T. YES. COME AND CHEER US UP. I SHALL MAKE THE UNCLE A CRACK PLAYER BEFORE LONG. MUSTN'T LET HIM GET LAZY AND SPEND HALF THE DAY OVER FIVE O'CLOCK tea. though." THIS WAS HARDLY A HINT. BUT IT WAS AN INDICATION OF THE TREND OF MR IVER'S. THOUGHTS SO IT WAS A DANGEROUS BALL. AND THAT CLEVER LITTLE CRICKETER. THE IMP. KEPT HER BAT AWAY FROM IT. SHE LAUGHED: THAT COMMITTED HER TO nothing—and left Iver to bowl again. "It's quite a change to find Harry Tristram at a tea-party, though! Making himself pleasant too!" "Not to me." observed Mina decisively. "YOU CHAFFED HIM. I EXPECT. HE STANDS A BIT ON HIS DIGNITY. AH WELL, HE'S voung, vou see." "No. he chaffed me. Oh. I think I—I left off even, you know." "THEY GET A BIT SPOILT." HE SEEVED TO BE REFERRING TO THE ARISTOCRACY. "BUT THERE'S PLENTY OF STUFF IN HIM. OR I'M MUCH MSTAKEN. HE'S A BORN fiahter. I think." "I wonder!" said Mina, her eves twinkling again.

FINALLY THERE WAS THE MAJOR TO BE WALKED HOME WITH—NOT A YOUTHFUL TRUMPHANT MAJOR, BUT A RATHER CAREWORN, UNDISCUSEDLY IRRITATED ONE. IF MINA WANTED SOMEBODY TO AGREE WITH HER PRESENT MOOD ABOUT HARRY TRISTRAM. HER LONGING WAS ABUNDANTLY GRATIFIED. THE MAJOR ROUNDLY

Mina wanted someooy to agree with Her present mood about Harry
Tristram, Her Longing was abundantly gratified. The Major roundly
termed Him an overbearing young cue, and professed a desire—
Almost an intention—to teach Him better manners. This coincidence
of views was a sore tempration to the limp, to resist it altocenter would

seem superhuman. "I should like to cut his comb for him." growled Duplav. WHATEVER THE METAPHOR ADOPTED, MINA WAS IN ESSENTIAL AGREEMENT.

SHE LAUNCHED ON AN ACCOUNT OF HOW HARRY HAD TREATED HER THEY fanned one another's fires, and the flames burnt merrily.

MINA'S STOCK OF DISCRETION WAS THREATENED WITH COMPLETE

CONSUMPTION. FROM OPEN DENUNCIATIONS SHE TURNED TO MYSTERIOUS hintings.

"I could bring him to reason if I liked," she said.

"WHAT, MAKE HIM FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU?" CRIED DUPLAY, WITH A SURPRISE not very complimentary.

"Oh no," she laughed; "better than that—by a great deal."

HE EYED HER CLOSELY: PROBABLY THIS WAS ONLY ANOTHER OF HER WHINSICAL

THE ETED HEN CLOSELT. PROCEEDED THIS WAS CIVET ANOTHER OF HEN WINDIGGE.

TRICKS, WITH WHICH HE WAS VERY FAMILIAR, IF HE SHOWED TOO MUCH INTEREST

SHE WOULD LAUCH AT HIM FOR BBING TAKEN IN. BUT SHE HAD HINTED BEFORE

TO-DAY'S ANNOYANCES: SHE WAS HINTING AGAIN.

HE HAD YAWNED AT HER

HINTS TILL HE BECAME HARRY TRISTRAMS RIVAL; HE WAS READY TO BE EAGER NOW, IF ONLY HE COULD BE SURE THAT THEY POINTED TO ANYTHING MORE THAN folly or delusion.

"OH, MY DEAR CHLD," HE EXCLAIMED, "YOU MUSTIN'T TALK NONSENSE. WE mayn't like him, but what in the world could you do to him?"
"I don't want to hurt him. but I should like to make him sing small."

"I don't want to hurt him, but I should like to make him sing small."

THEY HAD JUST BEACHED THE ECCUT OF THE HILL DURLAY WAVED HIS ARM

across the river toward the hall. Blent looked strong and stately.

"THAT'S A BIG TASK, MY DEAR." HE SAID, RECOVERING SOME OF HIS GOOD-

"THAT'S A BIG TASK, MY DEAR," HE SAID, RECOVERING SOME OF HIS GOOD-HUMOR AT THE SIGHT OF MINA'S WASPISH LITTLE FACE. "I FANCY IT'LL NEED A BIGGER MAN THAN YOU TO MAKE TRISTRAM OF BLENT SING SMALL." HE

LAUGHED AT HER INDULGENILY. "OR THAN ME ETHER, I'M AFRAID," HE ADDED, WITH A RUEFULNESS THAT WAS NOT ILL-TEMPERED. "WE MUST FIGHT HIM IN FAIR "HE DOESN'T FIGHT FAIR." SHE CRIED ANGRILY. THE NEXT INSTANT SHE BROKE INTO HER MOST MALIQOUS SMLE. "TRISTRAM OF BLENT!" SHE REPEATED. "OH well----"

"MINA. DEAR. DO YOU KNOW YOU RATHER BORE ME? IF YOU MEAN ANYTHING AT all——"

"I may mean what I like without telling you, I suppose?"

"Certainly-but don't ask me to listen." "You think it's all nonsense?"

fight, that's all."

"I do, my dear," confessed the Major.

How far he spoke sincerely he himself could hardly tell. Perhaps he

HAD AN ALTERNATIVE IN HIS MIND: IF SHE MEANT NOTHING. SHE WOULD HOLD HER PEACE AND CEASE TO WEARY HIM. IF SHE MEANT ANYTHING REAL, HIS CHALLENGE WOULD BRING IT OUT. BUT FOR THE MOMENT SHE HAD FALLEN INTO thought.

"No. HE DOESN'T FIGHT FAIR." SHE REPEATED. AS THOUGH TO HERSELF. SHE

GLANCED AT HER UNCLE IN A HESITATING, UNDECIDED WAY, "AND HE'S abominably rude," she went on, with a sudden return of pettishness.

THE MAJOR'S SHRUG EXPRESSED AN UTTER EXHAUSTION OF PATIENCE, A SCORNEUL IRRITATION, ALMOST A CONTEMPT FOR HER. SHE COULD NOT ENDURE IT:

SHE MUST JUSTIFY HERSELF. REVENGE HERSELF AT A BLOW ON HARRY FOR HIS RUDENESS AND ON HER UNGLE FOR HIS SCEPTICISM. THE TRIUMPH WOULD BE SWEET: SHE COULD NOT FOR THE MOMENT THINK OF ANY SERIOUSNESS IN WHAT SHE DID. SHE COULD NOT KEEP HER VICTORY TO HERSELF: SOMEBODY ELSE NOW MUST LOOK ON AT HARRY'S HUMILIATION. AT LEAST MUST SEE THAT SHE

HAD POWER TO BRING IT ABOUT. WITH THE HEIGHT OF MALICIOUS EXULTATION she looked up at Duplay and said:

DUPLAY STOPPED SHORT WHERE HE STOOD—ON THE SLOPE OF THE HILL ABOVE Blent itself.

"What? Is this more nonsense?"

"Suppose he wasn't Tristram of Blent at all?"

"No. it isn't nonsense."

petulance.

HE LOOKED AT HER STEADILY, ALMOST SEVERELY. UNDER HIS REGARD HER SMILE disappeared: she grew uncomfortable.

"Then I must know more about it. Come, Mina, this is no trifle, you know."
"I shan't tell you any more." she flashed out. In a last effort of

"YOU MUST," HE SAID CALMLY. "ALL YOU KNOW, ALL YOU THINK. COME, WE'LL have it out now at once."

SHE FOLLOWED LIKE A NAUGHTY CHILD. SHE COULD HAVE BITTEN HER TONGUE

SHE FOLLOWED LIKE A NAUGHTY CHILD. SHE COULD HAVE BITTEN HER TONGUE OUT, AS THE OLD PHRASE GOES. HER FIELINGS WENT ROUND LIKE A WEATHER-COCK; SHE WAS ASHAMED OF HERSELF, SORRY FOR HARRY—LYES, AND AFRAID OF HARRY. AND SHE WAS AFRAID OF DUPLAY TOO. SHE HAD RUN HERSELF INTO SOMETHING SERIOUS—THAT SHE SAW; SOMETHING SERIOUS IN WHICH TWO YESOLUTE MEN WE'VE INVOLVED. SHE DID NOT KNOW WHERE IT WOULD BND. BUT

NOW SHE COULD NOT RESIST. THE YOUTHFUL UNCLE SEEMED YOUTHFUL NO MORE;
HE WAS OLD, STRONG, AUTHORITATIVE. HE MADE HER FOLLOW HIM, AND HE
bade her speak.

SHE FOLLOWED, LIKE THE NAUGHTY CHILD SHE NOW SEEMED EVEN TO HERSELF;
AND PRESENTLY. IN THE LIBRARY. BESIDE THOSE WRETCHED BOOKS OF HERS. HER

OLD LAW-BOOKS AND HER PEERAGES, RELUCTANTILY, STUMBLINGLY, SULLENLY, STILL LIKE THE NAUGHTY CHILD WHO WOULD REVOLT BUT DARE NOT, SHE SPOKE AND

WHEN AT LAST HE LET HER GO WITH HER SECRET TOLD, SHE RAN UP TO HER OWN ROOM AND THREW HERSELF ON THE BED. SOBBING. SHE HAD LET HERSELF IN FOR something dreadful. It was all her own fault—and she was very sorry. Those were her two main conclusions. HER WHOLE BEHAVIOR WAS PROBABLY JUST WHAT THE GENTLEWAN TO WHOM she owed her nickname would have expected and prophesied.

V

The First Round

WITHIN THE LAST FEW DAYS THERE WERE OMINOUS RUMORS ARI OAT AS TO LADY TRISTRAMS HEALTH. IT WAS KNOWN THAT SHE COULD SEE NOBODY AND KEPT HER ROOM: IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE DOCTORS (A SPECIALIST HAD BEEN DOWN FROM TOWN) WERE LOOKING VERY GRAVE: IT WAS AGREED THAT HER CONSTITUTION HAD NOT THE STRENGTH TO SUPPORT A PROLONGED STRAIN. THERE WAS SYMPATHY—THE NEIGHBORHOOD WAS PROUD IN ITS WAY OF LADY TRISTRAM—AND THERE WAS THE USUAL INTEREST TO WHICH THE PROSPECT OF A DEATH AND A SUCCESSION GIVES RISE. THEY CANVASSED HARRY'S PROBABLE MERITS AND DEMERITS, ASKING HOW HE WOULD FILL THE VACANT THRONE, AND, MORE PARTICULARLY, WHETHER HE WOULD BE LIKELY TO ENTERTAIN FREELY, LAVISH HOSPITALITY AT BLENT WOULD MEAN MUCH TO THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD, AND IF IT WERE INDEED THE CASE (AS WAS NOW PROPHESIED IN WHISPERS) THAT MISS IVER OF FAIRHOLME WAS TO BE MISTRESS AT THE HALL. THERE WOLLD BE NOTHING TO PREVENT THE HOSPITALITIES FROM BEING AS SPLENDID AS THE MIND OF WOMAN COULD CONCEIVE. THERE WERE SPINSTER LADIES IN SWALL VILLAS AT BLENTMOUTH WHO WATCHED THE ILLNESS AND THE COURTSHIP AS KEENLY AS THOUGH THEY WERE TO SUCCEED THE SICK LADY TRISTRAM AND TO MARRY THE NEW LORD. YET A SINGLE GARDEN-PARTY IN THE YEAR WOULD REPRESENT PRETTY ACCURATELY THEIR PERSONAL STAKE IN THE MATTER. IF YOU live on crumbs, a good big crumb is not to be despised.

HARRY TRISTRAM WAS SORRY THAT HIS MOTHER MUST DIE AND THAT HE MUST LOSE HER; THE CONFEDERATES HAD BE COME CLOSE FRIENDS, AND NOBODY WHO KNEW HER INTIMATELY COULD HELP FEELING THAT HIS LIFE AND EVEN THE WORLD WOULD BE POORER BY THE LOSS OF A REAL, IF NOT STRIKING, INDIVIDUALITY.

BUT NETTHER HE NOR SHE THOUGHT OF HER DEATH AS THE MAIN THING: IT NO MORE THAN LISHERED IN THE CREAT EVENT FOR WHICH THEY HAD SPENT YEARS PREPARING. AND HE WAS DOWNRIGHT GLAD THAT SHE COULD SEE NO VISITORS: THAT FACT SAVED HIM ADDED ANXIETIES. AND SPARED HER THE NEED OF BEING TOLD ABOUT MINA ZABRISKA AND WARNED TO BEAR HERSELF WARLY TOWARD THE DAUGHTER OF MADAME DE KRIES. HARRY DID NOT ASK HIS MOTHER WHETHER SHE REMEMBERED THE NAME—THE QUESTION WAS UNNECESSARY: NOR DID HE TELL HIS MOTHER THAT ONE WHO HAD BORNE THE NAME WAS AT MERRION LODGE. HE WAITED, VAGUELY EXPECTING THAT TROUBLE WOULD COME FROM MERRION, BUT ENTIRELY CONFIDENT IN HIS ABILITY TO FIGHT, AND WORST, THE TRICKY LITTLE WOMAN WHOM HE HAD NOT FEARED TO SNUB: AND IN HIS HEART HE THOUGHT WELL OF HER. AND BELIEVED SHE HAD AS LITTLE INCLINATION TO HURT HIM AS SHE SEEMED TO HAVE POWER. HIS ONLY active step was to pursue his attentions to Janie Iver. YET HE WAS NOT HAPPY ABOUT HIS ATTENTIONS. HE MEANT TO MARRY THE GIRL. AND THOUGHT SHE WOULD MARRY HIM. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT SHE WAS INCLINED TO FALL IN LOVE WITH HIM. HE HAD NO RIGHT TO EXPECT IT. SINCE HE WAS NOT FALLING IN LOVE WITH HER. BUT IT HURT THAT TERRIBLE PRIDE OF HIS: HE was in a way disgusted with the part he had chosen, and humiliated to

THINK THAT HE MIGHT NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR HIMSELF. A REFLISAL WOULD HAVE HURT HIM INCALCULABLY: SUCH AN ASSENT AS HE COUNTED UPON WOULD WOUND HIM SOMEWHAT TOO. HE HAD KEEN EYES, AND HE HAD FORMED HIS OWN OPINON ABOUT BOB BROADLEY. NONE THE LESS, HE HELD STRAIGHT ON HIS COURSE: AND THE SPINSTER LADIES WERE A LITTLE SHOCKED TO OBSERVE THAT LADY TRISTRAM'S ILLNESS DID. NOT INTERFERE AT ALL WITH HER SON'S

courtship: people in that position of life were certainly curious. A NEW VEXATION HAD COME UPON HIM. THE WORK OF HIS PET AVERSIONS. THE

GAINSBOROUGHS. HE HAD SEEN MR GAINSBOROUGH ONCE, AND RETAINED A PICTURE OF A SMALL INFEFECTUAL MAN WITH A RACCED TAWNY-BROWN BEARD.

AND A BIG SOFT FELT HAT. WHO HAD AN AIR OF BEING VERY TIMID. RATHER

PRESSED FOR MONEY, AND ENDOWED WITH A KIND HEART. NOW, IT SEEMED, MR GAINSBOROUGH WAS AGAIN OVERFLOWING WITH FAMILY AFFECTION (A DAUGHTER-WANTED, IN FACT, A THOROUGH-GOING BURYING OF HATCHETS AND A TOUCHING RECONCLIATION. WITH THAT JUSTICE OF JUDGMENT OF WHICH NETTHER YOUTH NOR PREJUDICE QUITE DEPRIVED HIM. HARRY LIKED THE LETTER: BUT HE WAS CERTAIN THAT THE WRITER WOULD BE IMMENSELY TIRESOME. AND AGAIN --- IN THE BND AS IN THE BEGINNING---HE DID NOT WANT THE GAINSBOROLIGHS AT BLENT: ABOVE ALL NOT JUST AT THE TIME WHEN BLENT WAS ABOUT TO PASS. INTO HIS HANDS. IT LOOKED, HOWEVER, AS THOUGH IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO KEEP THEM AWAY. MR GAINSBOROUGH WAS OBVIOUSLY A MAN WHO WOULD NOT WASTE HIS CHANCE OF A FUNERAL: HE MIGHT BE FENCED WITH TILL THEN. BUT IT WOULD NEED STARTLING MEASURES TO KEEP HIM FROM A funeral. "I HATE HEARSEY PEOPLE" GRUMBLED HARRY, AS HE THREW THE LETTER DOWN, BUT THE GAINSBOROUGHS WERE SOON TO BE DRIVEN OUT OF HIS HEAD BY something more immediate and threatening. BLENT POOL IS A ROUND BASIN. SOME FIFTY OR SIXTY FEET IN DIAMETER: THE BANKS ARE STEEP AND THE DEPTH GREAT; ON THE BLENT HALL SIDE THERE IS NO APPROACH TO IT. EXCEPT THROUGH A THICK WOOD OVERHANGING THE WATER: ON THE OTHER SIDE THE ROAD UP THE VALLEY RUNS CLOSE BY, LEAVING A FEW YARDS OF TURE BETWEEN ITSELF AND THE BRINK THE SCENE IS GLOOMY EXCEPT. IN SUNSHINE, AND THE PLACE LITTLE FREQUENTED. IT WAS A FAVORITE HAUNT OF HARRY TRISTRAMS, AND HE LAY ON THE GRASS ONE EVENING, SMOKING AND LOOKING DOWN ON THE BLACK WATER: FOR THE CLOUDS WERE HEAVY ABOVE AND RAIN THREATENED. HIS OWN MOOD WAS IN HARWONY, GLOOMY AND DARK, IN REBELLION AGAINST THE BURDEN HE CARRIED, YET WITH NO THOUGHT OF LAYING IT DOWN. HE DID NOT NOTICE A MAN WHO CAME UP THE ROAD AND TOOK HIS STAND JUST BEHIND HIM. WAITING THERE FOR A MOMENT IN SILENCE and apparent irresolution. "Mr Tristram." HARRY TURNED HIS HEAD AND SAW MAJOR DUPLAY: THE MAJOR WAS GRAVE.

DISPOSITION NOT ALWAYS WELCOMED BY ITS OBJECTS), AND WANTED TO SHAKE POOR LADY TRISTRAMS HAND, AND WANTED POOR LADY TRISTRAM TO KISS HIS "YOU COULDN'T HAVE FOUND A MAN MORE AT LEISURE." HARRY DID NOT RISE,
BUT GATHERED HIS KNEES UP, CLASPING HIS HANDS ROUND THEM AND

looking up in Duplay's face. "You want to speak to me?"

"Yes, ON A DIFFICULT MATTER." A VISIBLE ENBARRASSMENT HUNG ABOUT THE

MAJOR: HE SEEMED TO HAVE LITTLE LIKING FOR HS TASK. "I'M AWARE." HE WENT

ON, "THAT I MAY LAY MYSELF OPEN TO SOME MISUNDERSTANDING IN WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY, I SHALL BEG YOU TO REMEMBER THAT I AM IN A DIFFICULT

position, and that I am a gentleman and a soldier."

to my knowledge which concern you very intimately."

almost solemn, as he raised his hat a trifle in formal salute.

"Do linterrupt you?"

will perhaps forgive."

HARRY SAID NOTHING; HE WAITED WITH UNMOVED FACE AND NO SIGN OF perturbation.

"It'S BEST TO BE PLAIN," DUPLAY PROCEEDED. "It'S BEST TO BE OPEN WITH YOU. I HAVE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF FOLLOWING YOU HERE FOR THAT PURPOSE." HE CAME A STEP NEARER, AND STOOD OVER HARRY. "CERTAIN FACTS HAVE COME

A POLITE CURIOSITY AND A SLIGHT SCEPTICISM WERE EXPRESSED IN HARRY'S
"Indeed!"
"AND NOT ONLY YOU, OR—I NEED HARDLY SAY—I SHOULDN'T FEEL IT NECESSARY
TO COCUPY MYSELF WITH THE MATTER A WORD ABOUT MY OWN POSITION YOU

HARRY FROMMED A LITTLE, CERTAINLY DUPLAY WAS INCLINED TO PROLIXITY; HE SEEMED TO BE ROLLING THE SITUATION ROUND HIS TONGUE AND MAKING THE MOST OF ITS Flavor.

"SINCE WE CAME HERE WE HAVE MADE MANY ACQUAINTANCES, YOUR OWN among the number; we are in a sense your guests."

"Not in a sense that puts you under any obligation," observed Harry.

LEAVE MY NIECE OLUT OF THE OLUSTION) HAVE BEEN RECEIVED WITH A HEARTY. CORDIAL. WARM FRIENDSHIP THAT SEEMS ALREADY AN OLD FRIENDSHIP. NOW that does put me under an obligation. Mr Tristram." "You refer to our friends the Ivers? Yes?" "IN MY VIEW, UNDER A HEAVY OBLIGATION, I AM, I SAY, IN MY JUDGWENT BOUND TO SERVE THEM IN ALL WAYS IN MY POWER. AND TO DEAL WITH THEM AS I should wish and expect them to deal with me in a similar case." Harry nodded a careless assent, and turned his eyes away toward the POOL: EVEN ALREADY HE SEEMED TO KNOW WHAT WAS COMING. OR something of it. "Facts have come to My knowledge of which it might be-indeed I MUST SAY OF WHICH IT IS-OF VITAL IMPORTANCE THAT MR IVER SHOULD BE informed." "I THOUGHT THE FACTS CONCERNED ME?" ASKED HARRY, WITH BROWS A LITTLE raised. "YES. AND AS MATTERS NOW STAND THEY CONCERN HIM TOO FOR THAT VERY

"I'm sincerely glad to hear you say that; it relieves my position to some EXTENT. BUT WE HAVE MADE FRIENDS TOO. IN ONE HOUSE I MYSELF (I MAY

REASON." DUPLAY HAD GATHERED CONFIDENCE; HIS TONE WAS CALM AND ASSURED AS HE CAME STEP BY STEP NEAR HIS MARK, AS HE ESTABLISHED position after position in his attack.

position after position in his attack.

"YOU ARE PAYING ATTENTIONS TO MISS IVER—WITH A VIEW TO MARRIAGE, I
DIESUME?"

HARRY MADE NO SIGN. DUPLAY PROCEEDED, SLOWLY AND WITH CAREFUL deliberation.

"Those attentions are offered and received as from Mir Tristram—as from the future. Lord Tristram of Blent. I can't believe that you're THE PAIN I SHALL INFLICT ON YOU. YOU, SIR, ARE NOT THE FUTURE LORD TRISTRAM OF BIENT."

A SILENCE FOLLOWED: A SLIGHT DRIZZLE HAD BEGUN TO FALL, SPECKLING THE WATERS OF THE POOL; neither man heeded it.

"IT WOULD BE IMPERTINENT IN ME," THE MAJOR RESUMED, "TO OFFER YOU ANY SYMPATHY ON THE SCORE OF THAT MISPORTUNE, BELIEVE ME, HOWEVER, THAT MY KNOWLEDGE—MY FULL KNOWLEDGE—OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES CAN INCLINE ME TO NOTHING BUT A DEEP REGRET. BUT FACTS ARE FACTS, HOWEVER HARDLY THEY MAY BEAR ON INDIVIDUALS." HE PAUSED. "I HAVE ASSERTED WHAT I

know. You are entitled to ask me for proofs. Mr Tristram."

amazed

HARRY WAS SLENT A MOMENT, THINKING VERY HARD. MANY MODES OF DEFENCE CAME INTO HIS BUSY BRAIN AND WERE REJECTED. SHOULD HE BE TEMPESTUOUS? NO. SHOULD HE BE AMAZED? AGAIN NO. EVEN ON HIS OWN THEORY OF THE STORY. DURLAY'S ASSERTION HARDLY BNITTLED HIM TO BE

IGNORANT OF WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY. IF YOU ARE, I MUST BEG FORGIVENESS FOR

"As regards my part in this matter," He said at last, "I have only this to say. The orgunistances of my birth—with which I am, as you rightly suppose, quite familiar—were such as to render the sort of notion you have got hold of flausible brough. I don't want what you call proofs—though you'll want them badly if you mean to pursue your present line. I have my own proofs—perfectly in order, perfectly satisfactory. That's all I have to say about my part of the matter. About your part in it I can, I think, be almost equally brief. Are you merely Mr Iver's priend, or are you also, as you put it, paying attentions to Miss Iver'?"

HARRY TRISTRAM LOOKED UP AT HIM. FOR THE FIRST TIME HE BROKE INTO A SMILE AS HE STUDIED DUPLAY'S FACE. "I SHOULDN'T IN THE LEAST WONDER," HE SAID ALMOST CHAPFINGLY, "IF YOU BELIEVED THAT TO BE TRUE. YOU GET HOLD OF

"That, sir, has nothing to do with it."

FATHER AND SHOW HIM YOUR PRECIOUS PROOFS. EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT YOU'RE AFTER MISS IVER YOURSELF. AND YET YOU SAY THAT IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT! THAT'S THE SORT OF THING A MAN MAY MANAGE TO BELIEVE ABOUT HIMSELF: IT'S NOT THE SORT OF THING THAT OTHER PEOPLE BELIEVE ABOUT HIM. MAJOR DUPLAY." HE ROSE SLOWLY TO HIS FEET AND THE MEN STOOD FACE TO FACE ON THE FTOSE OF THE POOL. THE RAIN FELL MORE HEAVILY: DUPLAY TURNED up his collar. Harry took no notice of the downpour. "I'M PERFECTLY SATISFIED AS TO THE HONESTY OF MY OWN MOTIVES." SAID. Duplay. "THAT'S NOT TRUE. AND YOU KNOW IT. YOU MAY TRY TO SHUT YOUR EYES, BUT vou can't succeed." DUPLAY WAS SHAKEN. HIS ENEMY PUT INTO WORDS WHAT HIS OWN. CONSCIENCE HAD SAID TO HIM. HIS POSITION WAS HARD: HE WAS DOING WHAT HONESTLY SEEMED TO HIM THE RIGHT THING TO DO: HE COULD NOT SEEM TO DO IT BECAUSE IT WAS RIGHT. HE WOULD BE WRONGING THE NOT DO IT. YET HOW UGLY IT COULD BE MADE TO LOOK! HE WAS NOT ABOVE SUSPICION EVEN TO HIMSELF, THOUGH HE CLUNG EAGERLY TO HIS PLEA OF honesty. "You fail to put yourself in my place——" he began. "Absolutely, I assure you." Harry interrupted, with guiet insolence.

a cock-and-bull story about my being illegitimate (Oh, I've no objection TO FLAINNESS ETHER IN ITS FROPER FLACE), YOU COME TO ME AND TELL ME ALMOST IN SO MANY WORDS THAT IF I DON'T GIVE UP THE LADY YOU'LL GO TO HER

DO. IT IS MY MOST EARNEST WISH TO TAKE NO STEPS IN THIS MATTER AT ALL; BUT THAT RESTS WITH YOU, NOT WITH ME. AT LEAST I DESIRE TO TAKE NONE DURING LADY TRISTRAMS ILLNESS, OR DURING HER LIFE SHOULD SHE UNHAPPLY NOT RECOVER."

"AND I CAN'T PUT MYSELF IN YOURS. SIR. BUT I CAN TELL YOU WHAT I MEAN TO

"MY MOTHER WILL NOT RECOVER," SAID HARRY, "IT'S A MATTER OF A FEW WEEKS

DUPLAY NODDED. "AT LEAST WAIT TILL THEN," HE URGED. "DO NOTHING MORE IN REGARD TO THE MATTER WE HAVE SPOKEN OF WHILE YOUR MOTHER LIVES." HE

at most."

SPOKE WITH GENUNE FEELING. HARRY TRISTRAM MARKED IT AND TOOK account of it. It was a point in the game to him.

account of it. It was a point in the game to him. "In Turn I"LL TELL YOU WHAT I MEAN TO DO," HE SAID. "I MEAN TO PROCEED EXACTLY AS IF YOU HAD NEVER COME TO MERRICN LODGE: HAD NEVER GOT

YOUR PROOFS FROM GOD KNOWS WHERE, AND HAD NEVER GIVEN ME THE
PLEASURE OF THIS VERY PROJULAR INTERVIEW. MY MOTHER WOULD ASK NO

FLEASURE OF THIS VERY PECULIAR INTERVIEW. MY MOTHER WOULD ASK NO CONSIDERATION FROM YOU, AND I ASK NONE FOR HER ANY MORE THAN FOR MYSELF. TO BE FLAIN FOR THE LAST TIME, SIR, YOU'RE MAKING A FOOL OF YOURSELF AT THE BEST, AND AT THE WORST A BLACKGUARD INTO THE BARGAIN." HE PAUSED AND BROKE INTO A LAUCH. "WELL, THEN, WHERE ARE THE PROOFS? SHOW THEM ME. OR SEND THEM DOWN TO BLENT. OR I'LL COME UP TO MERRION. We'll have a look at them—for your sake, not for mine."

"I MAY HAVE SPOKEN INEXACTLY, MR TRISTRAM. I KNOW THE FACTS; I COULD get, but have not yet got, the proof of them."

"THEN DON'T WASTE YOUR MONEY, MAJOR DURLAY." HE WAITED AN INSTANT

BEFORE HE GAVE A DEEPER THRUST. "OR IVER'S—BECAUSE I DON'T THINK YOUR PURSE IS LONG BNOUGH TO PURNISH THE RESOURCES OF WAR. YOU'D GET THE MONEY FROM HIM? I'M BEGINNING TO WONDER MORE AND MORE AT THE views people contrive to take of their own actions."

HARRY HAD FOUGHT HIS FIGHT WELL. BUT NOW PERHAPS HE WENT WRONG. EVEN

AS HE HAD GONE WRONG WITH MINA ZABRISKA AT FAIRHOLME. HE WAS NOT CONTENT TO DEFEAT OR REPEL; HE MUST TRIUMPH, HE MUST TAUNT. THE INSOLENCE OF HIS SPEECH AND AIR DROVE DUPLAY TO FURY. IF IT TOLD HIM HE

WAS BEATEN NOW, IT MADE HIM DETERMINED NOT TO GIVE UP THE CONTEST; IT MADE HIM WISH TOO THAT HE WAS IN A COUNTRY WHERE DUELLING WAS NOT considered absurd. At any rate he was minded to rebuke Harry.

"Tell me that when I'm beaten. It may console me," interrupted Harry.

"YOU'LL BE BEATEN, SIR, SOONER THAN YOU THIN," SAID DURLAY GRAVELY.

"BUT THOUGH YOU REFUSE MY OFFER, I SHALL CONSIDER LADY TRISTRAM. I WILL not move while she lives, unless you force me to it."

"By marrying the heiress you want?" sneered Harry.

"BY CARRYING OUT YOUR SWINDLING FLANS." DURLAY'S TEWER BEGAN TO FAIL HIM. "I ISTEN AS SOON AS YOUR BYCAGRIMENT IS ANNOL NOTED—IF IT EVER IS

"You're a young man——" he began.

MARRAGE, YOU'RE SAFE FROM ME. I HAVE NO OTHER FRIENDS HERE; THE REST
MUST LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES. BUT YOU SHALL NOT DELUDE MY FRIENDS WITH
false pretences."

"And I shall not spoil your game with Miss Iver?"

—I GO TO MR IVER WITH WHAT I KNOW. IF YOU ABANDON THE IDEA OF THAT

Duplay's temper quite failed him. He had not MEANT THS TO HAPPEN, HE HAD PICTURED HIMSELF CALM, HARRY WILD AND UNRESTRAINED—EITHER IN FURY OR IN SUPPLICATION. THE YOUNG MAN HAD HIMSELF IN HAND, FRINLY IN HAND; the elder lost self-control.

"If you insult me again, sir, I'll throw you in the river!"

Harry's slow smle broke across his face. With all his wariness and calculation he measured the Major's figure. The attitude of mind was not heroic; it was Harry's. Who, having ten thousand men, will go against him that has twenty thousand? A fool or a hero, Harry would have said, and he claimed neither name. But in the end he reckoned

that he was a match for the Major. He smiled more broadly and raised his brows, asking of sky and earth as he glanced round:
"Since when have blackmailers grown so sensitive?"

In an instant Duplay closed with him in a struggle on which hung not

DEATH INDEED, BUT AN UNPLEASANT AND HUMLIATING DUCKING. THE RAIN FELL ON BOTH, THE WATER WAITED FOR ONE. THE MAJOR WAS TALLER AND HEAVER, HARRY WAS YOUNGER AND IN BETTER TRIM. HARRY WAS COOLER TOO. IT WAS RUDE HUGGING, NOTHING MORE, NETHER OF THEM HAD SKILL OR KNEW MORE TRICKS THAN THE COMMON DIMLY REMEMBERED DEVICES OF URCHINHOOD. THE FIGHT WAS MOST UNPICTURESQUE, MOST UNHEROCK, BUT IT WAS TOLERABLY GRIM FOR ALL THAT. THE GRASS GREW SLIPTERY UNDER THE RAIN AND THE SLITHERING REET; LUCK HAD ITS SHARE. AND JUST BEHIND THEM RAIN THE QUEEN'S HIGHWAY. THEY DID NOT THINK OF THE QUEEN'S HIGHWAY. TO THIS PASS A DETERMINATION TO BE CALM, WHATEVER BLSE THEY WERE, HAD

brought them.

came.

COULD NOT SEE OVER THE MAJOR'S SHOULDER, BUT HE SAW PAST IT, AND SIGHTED A TALL DOG-CART DRIVEN QUICKLY AND RATHER RASHLY DOWN THE HILL. IT WAS RAINING HARD NOW, AND HAD NOT LOOKED LIKE RAIN WHEN THE DOG-CART STARTED. HATS WERE BEING RUINED—THERE WAS SOME EXCUSE FOR RISKING BROKEN KNEES TO THE HORSE AND BROKEN NECKS TO THE RIDERS. IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS STRUGGLE HARRY SMILED: HE PUT OUT HIS STRENGTH TOO; AND HE DID NOT WARN HIS ENEMY OF WHAT HE SAW, YET HE KNEW VERY WELL WHO WAS IN THE DOG-CART. DUPLAY'S ANGER HAD STIRRED HIM TO SEEK A PRIMITIVE THOUGH EFFECTIVE REVENGE. HARRY WAS HORING TO INFLICT A MORE SUBTLE RUINSHMENT. HE NEEDED ONLY A BIT OF LUCK TO HELP HIM TO IT; HE KNEW HOW TO USE THE CHANCE WHEN IT CAME—JUST AS WELL AS HE KNEW WHO WAS IN THE DOG-CART. SWELL AS HE GLESSED WHENCE THE DOG-CART

THE LUCK DID NOT FAIL. DUPLAY'S RIGHT FOOT SLIPPED. IN THE EFFORT TO RECOVER HIMSELF HE DARTED OUT HIS LEFT OVER THE EDGE OF THE BANK. HARRY IMPELLED HIM, THE MAJOR LOOSED HIS HOLD AND SET TO WORK TO SAVE HIMSELF—NONE TOO SOON: BOTH HIS LEGS WERE OVER, HIS FEET TOUCHED WATER, HE LAY SPREAD-FAGLED ON THE BANK, HALF ON, HALF OFF, IN A

THE VARYING WRIGGLES (NO MORE DIGNIFIED WORD IS APPROPRIATE) OF THE ENCOUNTER BNDED IN A STERN STIFF GRIP WHICH LOCKED THE MEN ONE TO THE other. Duplay FACING DOWN THE VALLEY, HARRY LOCKING UP THE RIVER, HARRY LUDICROUS ATTITUDE, STILL HE SLIPPED AND COULD NOT GET A HOLD ON THE SHORT SLIMY GRASS. AT THAT MOMENT THE DOG-CART WAS PULLED UP JUST BEHIND them.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING?" CRIED JANIE MER, LEANING FORWARD IN AMAZEMENT: MINA ZABRISKA SAT BESIDE HER WITH WIDE-OPEN EYES.

HARRY STOOPED, CAUGHT THE MAJOR UNDER THE SHOULDERS, AND WITH A GREAT EFFORT HAULED HIM UP ON THE BANK, A SAD SIGHT, DRAGGLED AND DIRTY.

THEN, AS DURLAY SLOWLY ROSE, HE TURNED WITH A START, AS THOUGH HE NOTICED THE NEW-COMERS FOR THE FIRST TIME. HE LAUGHED AS HE RAISED HIS CAP.

"WE DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE TO HAVE SPECTATORS," SAID HE. "AND YOU

NEARLY CAME IN FOR A TRAGEDY! HE WAS ALL BUT GONE. WEREN'T YOU.

Major?"

"What were you doing?" cred Jane again. Mina was slent and still, scrutinizing both men keenly.

"Why, we had been talking about wrestling, and the Major offered to show me a trick which he bet a shilling would floor me. Only the

GROUND WAS TOO SLIPPERY; WASN'T IT, MAJOR? AND THE TRICK DIDN'T EXACTLY come off. I wasn't floored, so I must trouble you for a shilling, Major."

MAJOR DUPLAY DID NOT LOOK AT JANE, STILL LESS DID HE MEET HS NEOE'S

EYE HE SPENT A FEW SECONOS IN A FIJILE FEFORT TO RIB THE MID OFF HS

coat with muddy hands; he glanced a moment at Harry.

"I MUST HAVE ANOTHER TRY SOME DAY," HE SAID, BUT WITH NO GREAT

readiness.

"MEANWHILE—THE SHILLING!" DEWANDED HARRY GOOD-HUMOREDLY, A SUBTLE

"MEANWHLE—THE SHILLING!" DEWANDED HARRY GOOD-HUMOREDLY, A SUBTLE MOCKERY IN HIS EYES ALONE SHOWING THE IMAGINARY CHARACTER OF THE BET Which he claimed to have won

IN THE PRESENCE OF THOSE TWO INCUISITIVE YOUNG WOMEN MAJOR DURLAY

DID NOT DENY THE DEBT. HE FELT IN HIS POCKET, FOUND A SHILLING, AND GAVE IT TO HARRY TRISTRAM. THAT YOUNG MAN LOOKED AT IT, SPUN IT IN THE AIR, AND pocketed it.

"Yes. A REVENCE WHENEVER YOU LIKE." SAID HE. "AND NOW WE'D BETTER get home, because it's begun to rain."

"Has it? I didn't notice. I was too busy with the Major's trick."

"Begun to! It's rained for half-an-hour." said Janie crossly.

As he spoke he looked full in Mina Zabriska's face. She bore his

GLANCE FOR A MOMENT. THEN CRIED TO JANIE. "OH. PLEASE DRIVE ON!" THE DOG-CART STARTED: THE MAJOR, WITH A STIFF TOUCH OF HIS HAT, STRODE ALONG

the ROAD. HARRY WAS LEFT ALONE BY THE POOL. HIS GAYETY AND DEFIANCE

VANISHED; HE STOOD THERE SCOWLING AT THE POOL. ON THE SURFACE THE HONORS OF THE BNOOUNTER WERE INDEED HIS: THE REAL PERIL REWAINED. THE

REAL BATTLE HAD STILL TO BE FOLIGHT. IT WAS WITH HEART-FRIT SINCERITY THAT HE

muttered, as he sought for pipe and tobacco:

"I wish I'd drowned the beggar in the Pool!"

VI

The Attraction of It

MR JENNISON NELD SAT AT LUNCH AT THE IMPERIUM CLUB, QUTE HAPPY with a neck chop, last week's *Athenæum*, and a pint of Apollinaris. To him enter disturbers of peace.

"How are you, Neeld?" Said Lord Southend, taking the chair next him.
"Sit down here, Iver. Let me introduce you—Mir Iver—Mir Neeld. Bill of fare, waiter." His lordship smiled rather maliciously at Mir Neeld as he made the introduction, which Iver acknowledged with bluff courtesy, Neeld with a timb little bow. "How are things down your way?" pursued Southend, addressing Iver. "Lady Tristram's very ill, I hear?"

"I'm afraid so."

"WONDERFUL WOMAN THAT, YOU KNOW. YOU OUGHT TO HAVE SEEN HER IN THE seventies—when she ran away with Randolph Edge."

A gentleman, two tables off, looked round.

"Hush, Southend! That's his brother," whispered Mr Neeld.

"Whose brother?" demanded Southend

"That's Wilmot Edge—Sir Randolph's brother."

"Oh, the deuce it is. I thought he'd been pilled."

BLACKBALLS ALSO WERE AN EMBARRASSING SUBJECT; NEELD SIPPED HIS Apollinari's nervously.

STRAIGHT FROM THE DUCHESS OF SLOUGH'S BALL TO THE STATION, AS SHE WAS. IN A LOW GOWN AND A SCARLET OPERA CLOAK-MET EDGE, WHOSE WIFE HAD ONLY BEEN DEAD THREE MONTHS—AND WENT OFF WITH HIM. YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY. IT WAS A NEAR RUN FOR YOUNG HARRY TRISTRAM! HOW IS THE bov. Iver?" "THE BOY'S VERY MUCH OF A MAN INDEED: WE DON'T TALK ABOUT THE NEAR run before him." Southend laughed. "A Miss is as good as a Mile." He said. "EH. NELD? I'D LIKE TO SEE ADDIE TRISTRAM AGAIN—THOUGH I SUPPOSE SHE'S a wreck, poor thing!" "Why couldn't she warry the Man Properly. Instead of Bolting?" ASKED lver. He did not approve of such escapades. "OH. HE HAD TO BOLT ANYHOW—A THOROUGH BAD LOT—DEBTS. YOU KNOW— HER PEOPLE WOULDN'T HEAR OF IT: BESIDES SHE WAS ENGAGED TO FRED NARES—YOU DON'T REMEMBER FRED? A DEVILISH PASSIONATE FELLOW, WITH A WART ON HIS NOSE. SO ALTOGETHER IT WAS EASIER TO OUT AND RUN. BESIDES SHE LIKED THE SORT OF THING, DON'T YOU KNOW. ROMANTIC AND ALL THAT, THEN EDGE VANISHED, AND THE OTHER MAN APPEARED. THAT TURNED out all right, but she ran it fine. Eh. Neeld?" Mr Neeld was sadly flustered by these recurring references to him. He HAD NO DESIRE TO POSE AS AN AUTHORITY ON THE SUBJECT. JOSIAH CHOLDERTON'S DIARY PUT HIM IN A DIFFICULTY. HE WISHED TO GOODNESS HE had been left to the peaceful delights of literary journalism. "WELL. IF YOU'LL COME DOWN TO MY PLACE. I CAN PROMISE TO SHOW YOU HARRY TRISTRAM, AND YOU CAN GO OVER AND SEE HIS MOTHER IF SHE'S better."

"BY JOVE, I'VE HALF A MIND TO! VERY KIND OF YOU, IVER, YOU'VE GOT A FINE

place, I hear."

"Well, as I was saving" (Lord Southend spoke a little lower), "she went

FOR MYSELF, MAYN'T I? WE'RE PROUD OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD." HE PURSUED. politely addressing himself to Mr Neeld, "If you're ever that way, I HOPE YOU'LL LOOK ME UP. I SHALL BE DELIGHTED TO WELCOME A FELLOW-MEMBER OF the Imperium." A SHORT CHUCKLE ESCAPED FROM LORD SOUTHEND'S LIPS: HE COVERED IT BY AN EXAGGERATED DEVOTION TO HIS BROILED KIDNEYS. MR NEELD TURNED PINK and murmured incoherent thanks: he felt like a traitor. "YES. WE SEE A GOOD DEAL OF YOUNG HARRY." SAID IVER, WITH A SMILE -- "AND OF OTHER YOUNG FELLOWS ABOUT THE PLACE TOO. THEY DON'T COME TO SEE ME. THOUGH. I EXPECT JANIE'S THE ATTRACTION. YOU REVIEWBER MY GIRL. Southend?" "WELL, I SUPPOSE BLENT'S WORTH NINE OR TEN THOUSAND A YEAR STILL?" THE progress of Lord Southend's thoughts was obvious. "H'M. SEVEN OR EIGHT, I SHOULD THINK, AS IT'S MANAGED NOW, IT'S A NICE place, though, and would go a good bit better in proper hands." "Paterfamilias considering?" "I DON'T QUITE MAKE THE YOUNG FELLOW OUT. HE'S GOT A GOOD OPINON OF himself, I fancy." Iver laughed a little. "Well, we shall see," he ended.

"I'VE BUILT SO MANY HOUSES FOR OTHER PEOPLE THAT I MAY BE ALLOWED ONE

NONE OF YOUR PINO-BECK. THE REAL THING—THOUGH, AS I SAY, YOUNG Harry's only got it by the skin of his teeth. Eh, Neeld?"

Mr Neeld laid down his napkin and pushed back his chair.

"SIT STILL, MAN. WE'VE NEARLY FINSHED, AND WE'LL ALL HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE

"NOT A BAD THING TO BE LADY TRISTRAM OF BLENT, YOU KNOW, IVER, THAT'S

together and a cigar."

MISFORTUNES ACCUMULATED, FOR NEELD HATED TOBACCO. BUT HE WAS ANXIOUS TO BE SCRUPULOUSLY POLITE TO IVER. AND THUS TO DEADEN THE

PANGS OF CONSCIENCE. RESIGNED THOUGH MISERABLE. HE WENT WITH THEM TO THE SMOKING-ROOM, COLONEL WILMOT EDGE LOOKED UP FROM THE and Navy Gazette. AND GLANCED CUROUSLY AT THE PARTY AS THEY PASSED HIS TABLE WHY WERE THESE OLD FELLOWS REVIVING OLD STORIES? THEY WERE BETTER LEFT AT REST. THE COLONEL GROANED AS HE WENT BACK TO HIS newspaper. HAPPLY, IN THE SMOKING-ROOM THE TALK SHIFTED TO LESS EMBARRASSING SUBJECTS. IVER TOLD OF HIS LIFE AND DOINGS. AND NEELD FOUND HIMSELF DRAWN TO THE MAN: HE LISTENED WITH INTEREST AND APPRECIATION: HE SEEMED BROUGHT INTO TOUCH WITH LIFE: HE CAUGHT HIMSELF SIGHING OVER THE RETIRED INACTIVE NATI RE OF HIS OWN COCCUPATIONS. HE FORGAVE IVER THE HOARDINGS ABOUT THE STREETS: HE COULD NOT FORGIVE HIMSELF THE REVENCE HE HAD TAKEN FOR THEM. IVER AND SOUTHEND SPOKE OF BIG SCHEWES IN WHICH THEY HAD BEEN OR WERE ENGAGED TOGETHER-LEGITIMATE ENTERPRISES, GOOD FOR THE NATION AS WELL AS FOR THEMSELVES. HOW HAD HE A USELESS OLD FOGY. DARED TO BLACKBALL A MAN LIKE IVER? AN occasional droll glance from Southend emphasized his compunction. "I SEE YOU'VE GOT A NEW THING COMING OUT, NEELD," SAID SOUTHEND, AFTER A PAUSE IN THE TALK, "I REVENBER OLD CHOLDERTON VERY WELL. HE WAS A STARCHY OLD CHAP. BUT HE KNEW HIS SUBJECTS. MAKES RATHER HEAVY reading. I should think, eh?" "NOT ALL OF IT, NOT BY ANY MEANS ALL OF IT," NEELD ASSURED HIM. "HE doesn't confine himself to business matters." "Still, even old Joe Cholderton's recreations——" "He was certainly mainly an observer, but he saw some interesting THINGS AND PEOPLE" THERE WAS A RENEWED TOLICH OF NERVOLISNESS IN MR.

Neeld's manner.

"Interesting people? H'm. Then I hope he's discreet?"

"OR THAT MR NEELD WILL BE DISCREET FOR HIM," IVER PUT IN. "THOUGH I DON'T

"OH YES, YOU DO, IVER. YOU KNOW THE WORLD. DON'T YOU BE TOO DISCREET, Neeld. Give us a taste of Joe's lighter style."

NEELD DID NOT QUITE APPROVE OF HIS DECEASED AND RESPECTED FRIEND BEING REPERRED TO AS "JOE," NOR DID HE DESIRE TO DISCUSS IN THAT company what he had and what he had not suppressed in the Journal.

"I HAVE USED THE BEST OF MY JUDGMENT," HE SAID FRIMLY, AND WAS surprised to find Iver smilling at him with an amused approval.

"THE LEAST LIKELY MEN BREAK OUT," LORD SOUTHEND CONTINUED HOPEFULLY.

KNOW WHY INTERESTING PEOPLE ARE SUPPOSED TO CREATE A NEED FOR

discretion "

them." said Iver.

"OH, I'M NOT SAYING ANYTHING. SHE WAS A PRETTY WOMAN. I JUST GAVE IT AS AN ILLUSTRATION. I HAPPEN TO KNOW IT'S TRUE, BECAUSE SHE TOLD ME herself."

"Ah, I'd begin to listen if he'd told you," was Iver's cautious comment.

"The Baptist Minister DOWN at My PLACE ONCE WAYLAID THE WIFE OF THE Chairman of Quarter Sessions and asked her to run away with him."
"That's ONE OF YOUR NONCONFORMST STORIES. SOUTHEND. I NEVER BELIEVE

"You give us the whole of old Joe Cholderton!" was Lord Southend's final injunction.
"Iwagine if I did!" thought Netl D. Beginning to feel, some of the Joy of

holding a secret.

Presently Southend took his leave, saying he had an engagement. To
his own surprise Neeld did not feel this to be an unwarrantable

PROCEEDING; HE SAT ON WITH IVER, AND FOUND HIMSELF CUNNINGLY ENCOURAGING HIS COMPANION TO TALK AGAIN ABOUT THE TRISTRAMS. THE STORY IN THE JOURNAL HAD NOT LOST ITS INTEREST FOR HIM HE HAD READ IT OVER BEEN THINKING OF THE TRISTRAMS TOO, AND HE RESPONDED READLY TO NEELD'S VEILED INVITATION. HE DESCRIBED BLENT FOR HIM, HE TOLD HIM HOW LADY TRISTRAM HAD LOOKED, AND THAT HER ILLNESS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FATAL; HE TALKED AGAIN OF HARRY TRISTRAM, HER DESTINED SUCCESSOR. BUT HE SAD NO MORE OF HIS DUCHTER. NEELD WAS LEFT WITHOUT ANY CLEAR IDEA THAT HIS COMPANION'S CONCERN WITH THE TRISTRAMS WAS MORE THAN THAT OF A NEIGHBOR OR BEYOND WHAT AN ANCIENT FAMILY WITH ODD EPISODES IN ITS history might naturally inspire.

MORE THAN ONCE AGAN; IT WAS STRANCE TO BE BROUGHT INTO CONTACT, EVEN AT SECOND-HAND, WITH THE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES AND FORTUNES IT CONCERNED. IT WAS EVIDENT THAT IVER. ON HIS SIDE, HAD FOR SOME REASON

"OH, YOU MUST COME TO BLENTIMOUTH, MIR NEELD, YOU MUST INDEED. FOR A FEW DAYS, NOW? CHOOSE YOUR TIME, ONLY LET IT BE SOON. WHY, IF YOU MADE YOUR WAY INTO THE LIBRARY AT BLENT, YOU MON'T HAPPEN ON A FIND THERE! A LOT OF INTERESTING STUFF THERE, I'M TOLD. AND WE SHALL BE VERY grateful for a visit."

NEELD WAS CONSCIOUS OF A STRONG DESIRE TO GO TO BLENTIMOUTH. BUT IT WOULD BE A WRONG THING TO DO; HE FELT THAT HE COULD NOT FAIRLY ACCEPT INER'S HOSPITALITY. AND HE FELT, MOREOVER, THAT HE HAD MUCH BETTER NOT GET HIMSELF MXED UP WITH THE TRISTRAMS OF BLENT. NO MAN IS BOUND TO ACT ON HEARSAY EVIDENCE, ESPECIALLY WHEN THAT EVIDENCE HAS BEEN

ACQUIRED THROUGH A CONFIDENTIAL CHANNEL. BUT IF HE CAME TO KNOW THE TRISTRAMS, TO KNOW HARRY TRISTRAM, HIS POSITION WOULD CERTAINLY BE peculiar. Well, that was in the end why he wanted to do it.

WER ROSE AND HELD OUT HIS HAND. "I MUST GO," HE SAID. "FAIRHOLME, BLENTIMOUTH! I HOPE I SHALL HAVE A LETTER FROM YOU SOON, TO TELL US TO LOOK OUT FOR YOU."

ONE OF THE UNEXPECTED LIKINGS THAT COCUR BETWEEN PEOPLE HAD HAPPENED. EACH MAN FELT IT AND RECOGNIZED IT IN THE OTHER. THEY WERE alone in the room for the moment.

"MR MER." SAID NEELD. IN HIS PRECISE PRIM TONES. "I MUST MAKE A CONFESSION TO YOU. WHEN YOU WERE UP FOR THIS CLUB I-MY VOTE WAS NOT in your favor." During a minute's silence iver looked at him with amusement and almost with affection "I'm glad you've told me that." "Well, I'm glad I have too," Neeld's laugh was nervous. "Because it shows that you're thinking of coming to Blentmouth." "Well—yes. I am." Answered Neeld, smiling, And they shook hands, HERE WAS THE BEGINNING OF A FRIENDSHP. HERE, ALSO, NEELD'S ENTRY ON THE SCENE WHERE HARRY TRISTRAM'S FORTUNES FORMED THE SUBJECT OF THE play.

temptation and come to Blentmouth. There had been little doubt about IT ALL ALONG: HIS CONFESSION TO IVER REMOVED THE LAST REAL OBSTACLE. THE STORY IN JOSIAH CHOLDERTON'S JOURNAL HAD HIM IN ITS GRIP, ON THE FIRST OCCASION OF TRIAL HIS RESOLUTION NOT TO BE MIXED UP WITH THE TRISTRAMS. MELTED AWAY. PERHAPS HE CONSOLED HIMSELF BY SAYING THAT HE WOULD

IT WAS NOW A FOREGONE CONCLUSION THAT MR NEED WOULD FALL BEFORE

BE. LIKE HIS DECEASED AND RESPECTED FRIEND, MAINLY AN OBSERVER. THE IMP. IT MAY BE REMEMBERED. HAD GONE TO MERRION LODGE WITH EXACTLY the same idea: it has been seen how it fared with her.

BY THE BLENT THE DRAWA SEEVED VERY CONSIDERATELY TO BE WAITING FOR HIM. IT SAYS MUCH FOR MAJOR DUPLAY THAT HIS UTTER AND HUMLIATING DEFEAT.

BY THE POOL HAD NOT DRIVEN HIM INTO ANY HASTY ACTION OR SHAKEN HIM IN

HIS ORIGINAL PURPOSE. HE WAS ABIDING BY THE OFFER WHICH HE HAD MADE. ALTHOUGH THE OFFER HAD BEEN SCORNFULLY REJECTED. IF HE COULD BY ANY

MEANS AVOID IT. HE WAS DETERMINED NOT TO MOVE WHILE LADY TRISTRAM

LIVED. HARRY MIGHT FORCE HIM TO ACT SOONER: THAT RESTED WITH HARRY, NOT WITH HIM. MEANWHLE HE DECLINED TO EXPLAIN EVEN TO MINA WHAT HAD

TIME, YET HS UN-HAPPINESS WAS NOTHING TO THE DEEP WOE, AND INDEED TERROR, WHICH HAD SETTLED ON MINA ZABRISKA. SHE HAD GUESSED ENOUGH TO SEE THAT, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, HARRY HAD SUCCEEDED IN HANDLING DUPLAY SO ROUGHLY AS TO DELAY, IF NOT TO THWART, HIS OPERATIONS; WHAT WOULD HE NOT DO TO HER, WHOM HE MUST KNOW TO BE THE ORIGINAL CAUSE OF THE TROUBLE? SHE USED TO STAND ON THE TERRACE AT MERRION AND WONDER ABOUT THIS; AND SHE DARED NOT GO TO FAIR-HOLME LEST SHE SHOULD ENCOUNTER HARRY. SHE MADE MANY GOOD RESOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE, BUT there was no comfort in the present days.

THE RESOLUTIONS WENT FOR NOTHING, EVEN IN THE MOMENT IN WHICH THEY WERE MADE. SHE HAD SUFFERED FOR MEDDLING; THAT WAS BAD: IT WAS

OCCURRED BY THE POOL, AND TREATED HER OPEN INCREDILITY AS TO HARRY'S EXPLANATION WITH SURVICE OR A SNUB. THE MAJOR WAS NOT HARRY AT THIS

WORSE TO THE IMP NOT TO MEDDLE, INACTIVITY WAS THE ONE THING unendurable.

SHE TOO, LIKE OLD MR NEELD IN LONDON TOWN, WAS DRAWN BY THE INTEREST.

SHE TOO, LIKE OLD MR NEELD IN LONDON TOWN, WAS DRAWN BY THE INTEREST OF THE POSITION, BY THE NEED OF SEEING HOW HARRY TRISTIRAM FOUGHT HS FIGHT. FOR FOUR DAYS SHE RESISTED; ON THE EVENING OF THE FIFTH, AFTER DINNER WHILE THE MALIOR DOZED. SHE CAME OUT ON THE THERRACE IN A CLOAK

DINNER, WHILE THE MAJOR DOZED, SHE CAME OUT ON THE TERRACE IN A CLOAK AND LOOKED DOWN THE HILL. IT WAS RATHER DARK, AND BLENT HALL LOOMED DIMLY IN THE VALLEY BELOW. SHE PULLED THE HOOD OF HER CLOAK OVER HER HEAD, AND BEGAN TO DESCEND THE HILL: SHE HAD NO SPECIAL PURPOSE; SHE

WANTED A NEARER LOOK AT BLENT, AND IT WAS A FINE NIGHT FOR A STROLL. SHE

CAME TO THE ROAD, CROSSED IT AFTER A MOMENTARY HESTIATION, AND STOOD
BY THE GATE OF THE LITTLE FOOT-BRIDGE, WHICH, IN THE DAYS BEFORE ENMITY
AROSE, HARRY TRISTRAM HAD TOLD HER WAS NEVER LOCKED. IT WAS NOT NOW.
MINA ADVANCED TO THE MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE AND LEANT ON THE PARAPET,

MINA ADVANCED TO THE MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE AND LEANT ON THE PARAFE
HER EYES SET ON BLENT HALL. THERE WERE LIGHTS IN THE LOWER WINDOWS;
ONE WINDOW ON THE UPPER FLOOR WAS LIGHTED TOO. THERE, DOUBTLESS,

LADY TRISTRAM LAY SLOWLY DYING; SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE HOUSE HARRY
WAS KEEPING HIS GUARD AND PERFECTING HIS DEFENCES. THE ABSOLUTE

PEACE AND REST OF THE OUTWARD VIEW, THE SLEEPLESS VIGILANCE AND

painfulness; her eyes filled with tears as she stood looking.

A MAN CAME OUT INTO THE GARDEN AND LIT A CIGAR; SHE KNEW IT WAS
HARRY; SHE DID NOT MOVE. HE SAUNTERED TOWARD THE BRIDGE; SHE HELD
HER GROUND: THOUGH HE SHOULD STRIKE HER. SHE WOULD HAVE SPETCH WITH

UNCEASING BATTLE WITHIN, A BATTLE THAT DEATH MADE KEENER AND COULD NOT LILL TO REST.—THIS CONTRAST CAME LIPON MINA WITH A STRANGE

CAME TO HER SIDE, AND LEANT AS SHE WAS LEANING OVER THE PARAPET. HE WAS BARE-HEADED—SHE SAW HIS THOK HAIR AND HIS PEAKED FOREHEAD; HE SMOKED STEADLY; HE SHOWED NO SURPRISE AT SEEING HER, AND HE DID NOT SPEAK TO HER FOR A LONG TIME. AT LAST, STILL WITHOUT LOOKING AT HER, HE BEGAN. SHE COULD JUST MAKE OUT HIS SWILE, OR THOUGHT SHE COULD; AT ANY rate she was sure it was there.

HIM TO-NIGHT. HE WAS BY THE BRIDGE AND HAD HIS HAND ON THE GATE AT THE BLENT END OF IT BEFORE HE SAW HER. HE STOOD STILL A MOMENT. THEN

"WELL, MINA DE KRES?" SAID HE. SHE STARTED A LITTLE. "OH, I DON'T BELIEVE IN THE LATE ZABRISKA; I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'RE GROWN UP, I THINK YOU'RE ABOUT FIFTEEN—A BEASTLY AGE." HE PUT HIS O'GAR BACK IN HIS MOUTH.

"YOU SEE THAT WINDOW?" HE RESUMED IN A MOMENT. "AND YOU KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING BEHIND IT? MY MOTHER'S DYING THERE. WELL, HOW'S THE

Major? Has he got that trick in better order yet?"

She found her tongue with difficulty.

"Does Lady Tristram know about—about me?" she stammered.

"I SOMETIMES LIE TO MY MOTHER," SAID HARRY, FLICKING HS ASH INTO THE river. "Why do you lie to your uncle, though?"

"I didn't lie. You know I didn't lie."

HE SHRUGGED HIS SHOULDERS WEARLY AND RELAPSED INTO SILENCE. SILENCE THERE WAS TILL, A MINUTE OR TWO LATER, IT WAS BROKEN BY A LITTLE SOB FROM MINA ZABRISKA. HE TURNED HIS HEAD TOWARD HER; THEN HE TOOK HOLD OF HER ARM AND TWISTED HER FACE ROUND TO HIM. THE TEARS WERE RUNNING down her cheeks.

"I'M SO, SO SORRY," SHE MURMURED. "I DIDN'T MEAN TO; AND I DID IT! AND NOW—NOW I CAN'T STOP IT. YOU NEEDN'T BELIEVE ME IF YOU DON'T LIKE, BUT I'm—I'm miserable and—and frightened."

I'm—I'm miserable and—and frightened."

HE FLUNG HS OGAR INTO THE WATER AND PUT HS HANDS IN HS POCKETS. SO

HE STOOD WATCHING HER, HIS BODY SWAYING A LITTLE TO AND FRO; HIS EYES WERE SUSPICIOUS OF HER, YET THEY SEEMED AMUSED ALSO, AND THEY WERE NOT CRUEL; IT WAS NOT SUCH A LOOK AS HE HAD GIVEN HER WHEN THEY PARTIED

NOT CRUEL; IT WAS NOT SUCH A LOOK AS HE HAD GIVEN HER WHEN THEY PARTED by the Pool.

"IE IT WERE TRIES" SHE ASKED. "I MEAN COULDN'T LADY TRISTRAM.

"IF IT WERE TRUE?" SHE ASKED. "I MEAN, COULDN'T LADY TRISTRAM somehow——?"

"IF WHAT WAS TRUE? OH, THE NONSENSE YOU TOLD DURLAY?" HE LAUGHED. "IF IT WAS TRUE, I SHOULD BE A NOBODY AND NOBODY'S SON. I SUPPOSE THAT

IT WAS TRUE, I SHOULD BE A NOBODY AND NOBODY'S SON. I SUPPOSE ITALI
WOULD AMUSE YOU VERY MUCH, WOULD'NT IT? YOU WOULD'NT HAVE COME TO
Merrion for nothing then! But as it isn't true, what's the use of talking?"

HE WON NO BELIEF FROM HER WHEN HE SAID THAT IT WAS NOT TRUE, TO HER

HE WON NO BELIEF FROM HER WHEN HE SAID THAT IT WAS NOT TRUE; TO HER QUICK MIND THE CONCENTRATED BITTERNESS WITH WHICH HE DESCRIBED WHAT IT WOULD MEAN TO HIM SHOWED THAT HE BELIEVED IT AND THAT THE THOUGHT WAS NO NEW ONE; IN IMAGINATION HE HAD HEARD THE WORLD CALLING HIM MANY TIMES WHAT HE NOW CALLED HIMSELF—IF THE THING WERE TRUE. SHE

"Cold?" he asked. "No. Wretched, wretched."

drew her cloak round her and shivered.

"Would you like to see my mother?"

"You wouldn't let her see me?"

Come along."

HE TURNED AND BEGAN TO WALK QUICKLY TOWARD THE HOUSE, MINA FOLLOWED

HIM AS THOUGH IN A DREAM. THEY ENTERED A LARGE HALL. IT WAS DARK, SAVE

FOR ONE CANDLE, AND SHE COULD SEE NOTHING OF ITS FURNITURE. HE LED HER

"SHE'S ASLEEP. AND THE NURSE IS AT SUPPER—NOT THAT SHE'D MATTER.

THEN ALONG A CORRIDOR. THE POLISHED OAK GLEAMED HERE AND THERE AS THEY PASSED CANDLES IN BRACKETS ON THE WALL, AND WAS SLIPPERY UNDER HER UNACCUSTOMED FRET. THE WHOLE HOUSE WAS VERY STILL—STILL, COOL, and very peaceful.

STRAIGHT UP A BROAD OAK STAIRCASE THAT ROSE FROM THE MIDDLE OF IT. AND

CAUTIOUSLY HE OPENED A DOOR AND BEOKONED HER TO FOLLOW HIM. LIGHTS WERE BURNING IN THE ROOM. LADY TRISTRAM LAY SLEEPING; HER HAIR, STILL FAIR AND GOLDEN, SPREAD OVER THE PILLOW; HER FACE WAS CALM AND UNLINED.

SHE SEEMED A YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL GIRL WASTED BY A FEVER; BUT THE FEVER WAS THE FEVER OF LIFE AS WELL AS OF DISEASE. THUS MINA SAW AGAIN the lady she had seen at Heidelberg.

"She won't wake—she's had her sleeping draught," he said; and Mina TOOK HM TO MEAN THAT SHE MIGHT LINGER A MOMENT MORE. SHE CAST HER EYES ROUND THE ROOM. O'VER THE FIREPLACE, FACING THE BED, WAS A FULL-LENGTH PORTRAIT OF A GIRL. SHE WAS DRESSED ALL IN RED; THE GLORY OF HER WHITE NECK, HER BRILLIANT HAIR, AND HER BLUE EYES ROSE OUT OF THE SCARLET SETTING. THIS WAS ADDIE TRISTRAM IN HER PRIVE, AS SHE WAS WHEN SHE

FLED WITH RANDOLPH EDGE, AS SHE WAS WHEN SHE CRIED IN THE LITTLE ROOM AT HEIDELBERG, "THINK OF THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES, THE BNORMOUS difference!"

"My mother likes to have that picture there," Harry explained.

THE SLEEPING WOMAN STRRED FAINTLY. IN OBEDIBNOE TO A LOOK FROM HARRY,

Mina followed him from the room, and they passed downstars and through the hall together in silence. He came with her as far as the bridge. There he paused. The soene they had left had apparently

STIRRED NO NEW EMOTION IN HIM, BUT MINA ZABRISKA WAS TREMBLING AND moved to the heart.

"Now YOU'VE SEEN HER—AND BEFORE THAT YOU'D SEEN ME. AND PERHAPS

LIVE AND DIE THAT." HIS VOICE GREW A LITTLE LOUDER. "AND YOUR NONSBNSE!" HE EXCLAIMED; "IT'S ALL A LIE. BUT IF IT WAS TRUE? IT'S THE BLOOD, ISN'T IT, NOT THE LAW, THAT MATTERS? IT'S HER BLOOD AND MY BLOOD. THAT'S MY REAL TITLE to Blent!"

IN THE MOST OF HIS LYING HE SPOKE TRUTH THERE, AND MINA KNEW IT. IT SEEMED AS THOUGH THERE. TO HER. IN THE PRIVACY OF THAT NIGHT. HE LIED AS

NOW YOU'LL UNDERSTAND THAT WE'RE THE TRISTRAMS OF BLENT, AND THAT WE

BUT A MATTER OF FORM, HIS TRUE HEART, HIS TRUE PURPOSE, AND HIS TRUE CREED HE SHOWED HER IN HIS LAST WORDS. BY RIGHT OF BLOOD HE CLAIMED TO stand master of Blent, and so he meant to stand.

"YES," SHE SAID. "YES, YES. GOD HELP YOU TO IT." SHE TURNED AND LEFT him, and ran up the hill, catching her breath in sobs again.

HARRY TRISTRAM STOOD AND WATCHED HER AS LONG AS HE COULD SEE HER RETREATING FIGURE. THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF EXCITEMENT ABOUT HIM, EVEN HIS CONFESSION OF FAITH HE HAD SPOKEN CALMLY, ALTHOUGH WITH STRONG EMPHASIS. HE SMLED NOW AS HE TURNED ON HIS HEEL AND TOOK HIS WAY back to the house.

HE SHOOK HIS HEAD IN PUZZLE; PERHAPS HE COULD HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO RECOGNIZE THAT IT WAS THAT PRIDE OF HIS—PRIDE IN HIS MOTHER; HIS RACE, HIMSELF—WHICH HAD MADE HIM BID MINA ZABRISKA LOOK UPON LADY Tristram as she slept.



VII

The Moment Draws Near

NOT KNOWING YOUR OWN MIND. THOUGH GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS AN INTELLECTUAL WEAKNESS AND SOMETIMES AS A MORAL FAULT. IS NONE THE LESS NOW AND THEN A PLEASANT STATE TO LIVE IN FOR A WHILE. THERE IS A RICHNESS OF POSSIBILITY ABOUT IT. A VARIETY OF PROSPECTS OPEN. A CHOICE OF ROADS EACH IN ITS OWN FASHION ATTRACTIVE. BESIDES, YOU CAN ALWAYS. THE YOURSHIE THAT IT IS PREDENT TO LOOK ALL ROLLD THE QUESTION AND CONSIDER ALL ALTERNATIVES. THE PLEASURE, LIKE MOST PLEASURES, IS GREATER WHEN IT COMES ONCE IN A WAY TO A PERSON LINACCUSTOMED TO IT. JAME IVER HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP TO KNOW HER OWN MIND: IT WAS THE BLEVENTH COMMANDMENT IN THE IVER HOUSEHOLD. IVER ENTERTAINED THE INTELLECTUAL, his wife the moral objection to shilly-shallying; their daughter's training, WHILE CONDUCTED WITH ALL KINDNESS, HAD BEEN EMINENTLY SENSIBLE, AND FARLY DAYS HAD OFFERED FEW TEMPTATIONS TO STRAY FROM THE PATH OF THE OBVIOUSLY DESIRABLE. THE CASE WAS DIFFERENT NOW: RICHES BROUGHT A CHANGE. THE WORLD REVEALED ITS RESOURCES. LIFE WAS SPREADING OUT ITS DIVERSE WARES. JANIE WAS MUCH PUZZLED AS TO WHAT SHE OUGHT TO DO, MORE AS TO WHAT SHE WANTED TO DO, MOST OF ALL AS TO WHAT SHE WOULD IN THE END DO-LIN ESS INDEED THE FACT THAT SHE WAS PLZZLED CONTINUED TO rank as the greatest puzzle of all.

NATURALLY THE RUZZLES WERE PERSONFIED—OR THE PERSONS MADE INTO RUZZLES. MEN BECAME LIVES TO HER, AS WELL AS INDIVIDUALS—THE TRISTRAM, THE DUPLAY, THE BROADLEY LIPE, HER OPINION OF THE LIPE COMPLICATED HER FEELING TOWARD THE PERSON. THE TRISTRAM LIPE ATTRACTED HER STRONGLY, THE LIPE OF THE GREAT LADY; HARRY HAD HIS FASONATION TOO; WOMAN AND MAN. SHE WAS LOTH TO LET HIM GO. WITH ALL THAT HE MEANT: PERHAPS SHE WOLLD HAVE BEEN SECRETLY RELIEVED IF FATE HAD TAKEN HIM AWAY FROM HER. THE DUPLAY LIFE PROMSED ANOTHER SORT OF JOY: THE MAJOR'S EXPERIENCE WAS WORLD-WIDE. HIS KNOWLEDGE VARIOUS. HIS CONVERSATION FULL OF HINTS OF THE UNEXPLORED: SHE WOULD BE BROADENING HER LIFE IF SHE IDENTIFIED IT WITH HIS. YET THE MALIOR WAS AN APPROXIMATE FORTY (ON ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER). IN A FEW YEARS WOULD SEEM RATHER OLD. AND WAS NOT EVEN NOW CAPABLE OF RAISING A VERY STRONG SENTIMENT: THERE TOO SHE WOULD BE TAKING RATHER THE LIFE THAN THE MAN. LASTLY THERE WAS THAT CLUET BROADLEY LIFE TO BE TRANSFORMED IN SOME DECREE. DOUBTLESS. BY HER WEALTH. BUT LIKELY TO REMAIN IN ESSENTIALS THE PEACEPUL HOMELY EXISTENCE WHICH SHE KNEW VERY WELL. IT HAD LITTLE TO SET. AGAINST THE RIVAL PROSPECTS: YET THERE WAS A FEELING THAT IN EITHER OF THE OTHER TWO EXISTENCES SHE WOULD MISS SOMETHING: AND THAT SOMETHING seemed to be Bob Broadley himself. SHE FOUND HERSELF THINKING, IN TERMS SUPERFICIALLY REPUGNANT TO CONVENTION. THAT SHE WOULD LIKE TO PAY LONG VISITS TO THE OTHER MEN. BUT HAVE BOB TO COME HOME TO WHEN SHE WAS INCLINED FOR REST AND TRANQUILLITY. HER PERPLEXITY WAS NOT STRANGE IN ITSELF, BUT IT WAS STRANGE AND NEW TO HER: IMBUED WITH THE PARENTAL VIEWS ABOUT SHILLY-SHALLYING. SHE WAS ANGRY WITH HERSELF AND INCLINED TO BE ASHAMED. THE EXCUSE SHE HAD MADE TO MINA ZABRISKA DID NOT ACCUIT HER IN HER OWN EYES. YET SHE WAS ALSO INTERESTED. EXCITED. AND PLEASANTLY AWAKE TO THE importance which her indecision gave her. JUDGED FROM THE OUTSIDE, SHE WAS NOT OPEN TO BLAME IN HER ATTITUDE TOWARD HARRY: HE WAS NOT IN LOVE WITH HER. AND HARDLY PRETBNDED TO BE.

BUT SHE DID NOT THINK THAT SHE AND HARRY WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TOGETHER

IMPORTANCE WHICH NET INDECISION GAVE NET.

JUDGED FROM THE OUTSIDE, SHE WAS NOT OPEN TO BLAME IN HER ATTITUDE
TOWARD HARRY; HE WAS NOT IN LOVE WITH HER, AND HARDLY PRETENDED TO BE.
SHE MET HIM FAIRLY ON A FRIENDLY FOOTING OF BUSINESS; HE WAS THE SINNER
IN THAT, WHILE WHAT SHE OFFERED WAS UNDOUBTEDLY HERS, WHAT HE
proposed to give in return was only precariously his.

NOR HAD DURLAY ANY CAUSE OF COMPLAINT IN BEING KEPT WAITING: HE

SUBTLE QUESTION OF WHAT EXACTLY CONSTITUTES "ENCOURAGEMENT" (IT IS THE TECHNICAL TERM) IN THESE CASES IT IS NOT PERHAPS NECESSARY TO ENTER: BUT FALSE HOPES MIGHT. NO DOUBT, ARISE FROM HER VISITS TO MINGHAM. FROM HER HABIT OF RIDING UP THE ROAD BY THE RIVER ABOUT THE TIME WHEN BOB WOULD BE LIKELY TO BE RIDING DOWN IT. OR OF SAUNTERING BY THE POOL this being beyond and outside legitimate meetings at Fairholme itself. UNLESS SHE MEANT TO MARRY HIM SHE MIGHT INDEED RAISE HOPES THAT were false. YES, BUT IT DID NOT SEEM AS THOUGH SHE DID. BOB WAS HUMBLE, SHE HAD TYRANNIZED OVER HIM EVEN BEFORE THE IVERS GREW SO VERY RICH. (THEY HAD BEGIN IN A SMALL VILLA AT BLENTMOLITH—MISS SWINKERTON LIVED THERE NOW.) IT WAS NATURAL THAT SHE SHOULD TYRANNIZE STILL. HE SAW THAT SHE LIKED TO MEET HIM: GRATEFUL FOR FRIENDSHIP. HE WAS INCREDULOUS OF MORE. HIS DISPOSITION MAY PLEAD IN EXCUSE FOR HER: WHATEVER SHE DID. SHE would not disappoint a confident hope. BUT SHE WAS ALWAYS SO GLAD TO SEE HIM, AND WHEN SHE WAS WITH HIM. HE WAS NO PERPLEXITY. HE WAS ONLY HER DEAR OLD FRIEND. WILL. AND ONE THING BESIDES—A MAN WHOM IT WAS RATHER AM ISING TO TRY TO GET A COMPLIMENT OUT OF. TO TRY TO TORMENT INTO A MANIFESTATION OF WAS ALL THERE JANIE LIKED TO LURE IT TO THE SURFACE SOMETIMES. BUT BOB WAS NOT EVEN VISIBLY MISERABLE. HE WAS ALWAYS EQUABLE. EVEN JOLLY. WITH SO MUCH TO SAY ABOUT HIS HORSES AND HIS FARM THAT SENTIMENT DID. NOT ALWAYS SECURE ITS FAIR SHARE OF THE INTERVIEW. JANIE, NOT BEING sentimental either, liked all this even while it affronted her vanity. "SEND THE GIG HOME AND STAY AND TALK," SHE COMMANDED, AS HE STOPPED BY HER ON THE ROAD: HE WAS RETURNING FROM BLENTMOUTH TO Mingham and found her strolling by the Pool, "I want to speak to you,"

HE HAD HIS BAILIFF WITH HIM-THEY HAD BEEN SELLING A COW-AND LEFT HIM

WOULD BE HELD EXCEEDINGLY LUCKY NOT TO BE SENT TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT INSTANTLY. BUT WITH BOB BROADLEY THE MATTER WAS DIFFERENT. ON THE

"That's awfully nice of you." he said. "What about?" "Nothing in particular." said she. "Mavn't I want it just generally?" "OH, WELL, I THOUGHT YOU MEANT THERE WAS SOMETHING SPECIAL, I'VE SOLD.

to take the gig home. He shook hands with frank cordiality.

the cow well. Miss Janie." "Bother the cow! Why haven't you been to Fairholme?"

"WELL, IN FACT, I'M NOT SURE THAT MR IVER IS DEATH ON SEEING ME THERE TOO. often. But I shall turn up all right soon." "Have you been going about anywhere?"

"No. Been up at Mingham most of the time."

"Isn't that rather lonely?"

"Lonely? Good Heavens, no! I've got too much to do."

JANIE GLANCED AT HIM: WHAT WAS TO BE DONE WITH A MAN WHO TREATED PROVOCATIVE SUGGESTIONS AS THOUGH THEY WERE SINCERE QUESTIONS? IF HE had not cared for her now! But she knew he did.

"WELL, I'VE BEEN VERY DULL, ANYHOW. ONE NEVER SEES ANYBODY FRESH AT Fairholme now. It's always either Mr. Tristram or Major Duplay."

"WELL. I SHOULDN'T BE VERY FRESH EITHER. SHOULD I?" THE NAMES SHE mentioned drew no sign from him.

"I DON'T COUNT YOU AS A VISITOR AT ALL—AND THEY ARE VISITORS, I SUPPOSE." SHE SEEMED A LITTLE IN DOUBT: YET BOTH THE GENTLEMEN, AT ANY RATE, WERE

not presumably received as members of the family.

"I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT," SAID BOB, SPEAKING SLOWLY, and apparently approaching a momentous announcement.

MIND WHETHER TO DO IT NOW OR KEEP HIM THROUGH THE SUMMER AND SELL him when hunting begins. I don't know which would pay me best." "THAT CERTAINLY IS A VERY IMPORTANT CUESTION." REMARKED JAME, WITH A wealth of sarcasm. "Well, it gives me a lot of trouble, Miss Janie," "Does it? And it doesn't interest me in the very—Yes, it does, Bob. very much, I'm sorry. Of course it does, Only----" "Anything the matter with you?" Bob inquired with friendly solicitude. "No-not just now. There never is, somehow, when I'm with you, And LET'S TALK ABOUT THE BLACK HORSE—IT'LL BE SOOTHING. IS THE PRICE OF OATS A factor?" BOB LAUGHED A LITTLE, BUT DID NOT PROCEED WITH THE DISCUSSION, THEY sauntered on in silence for a few minutes. Bob taking out his tobacco. "Worried, aren't you?" he asked, lighting his pipe. "Yes," she answered shortly. "Was that what you wanted to say to me?" "No. of course not: as if I should talk to you about it!" "Don't suppose you would, no. Still, we're friends, aren't we?" "Do you feel friendly to me?"

"FRENDLY! WELL-!" HE LAUGHED. "WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT IT

"Yes," she said, turning to him with interest, and watching his Handsome open face it was not a very clever face. But it was a very

"I'VE BEEN THINKING THAT I'LL SELL THE BLACK HORSE, BUT I CAN'T MAKE UP MY

pleasant one: she enjoyed looking at it.

you want me."
"When I want you?"
"I MEAN. IF I CAN DO ANYTHING FOR YOU. OR—OR ADVISE YOU. I DON'T THINK I'M

YOURSELF?" HE ASKED. "LOOK HERE. I DON'T BOTHER YOU. BUT I'M HERE WHEN

a fool, you know."

"I'M REALLY GLAD TO HEAR YOU'VE GOT AS FAR AS THAT," SHE REWARKED RATHER tartly. "Your fault. Bob. is not thinking nearly enough of yourself."

"You'll soon change that, if you say much more." His fleasure in her infilied fraise was obvious, but he did not read a single word more into her speech than the words she uttered.

"And you are friendly to me—still?"

"It doesn't make any difference to me whether I see you or not——"

"WHAT?" SHE CRIED. THE NEXT MOMENT SHE WAS LAUGHING. "THANKS, BOB, BUT—BUT YOU'VE A FUNNY WAY OF PUTTING THINGS SOMETIMES." SHE laid her hand on his arm for a moment, sighing, "Dear old Bob!"

"OH. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN." HE SAID. PUFFING AWAY. HIS HEALTHY SKIN

had flushed a trifle, but that was his only reply to her little caress.

"IF—IF I CAME TO YOU SOME DAY AND SAID I'D BEEN A FOOL, OR BEEN MADE A FOOL OF, AND WAS VERY UNHAPPY, AND—AND WANTED COMFORTING, WOULD you still be nice to me?"

His answer came after a puff and a pause.

"Well, IF You ever get like that, I should recommend you just to try me FOR WHAT I'M WORTH," HE SAID. HER EYES WERE FIXED ON HIS FACE, BUT HE

DID NOT LOOK AT HER. SOME MEN WOULD HAVE SEEN IN HER AFFEAL AN
OPPORTUNITY OF TRYING TO WIN FROM HER MORE THAN SHE WAS GIVING. THE
CASE DID NOT PRESENT ITSELF IN THAT LIGHT TO BOS BROADLEY. HE DID NOT

PRESS HIS OWN ADVANTAGE. HE HARDLY BELIEVED IN IT: AND HE HAD. BESIDES. A VAGUE IDEA THAT HE WOULD SPOIL FOR HER THE FEELING SHE HAD IF HE CREETED IT WITH TOO MUCH ENTHUSIASM. WHAT SHE WANTED WAS A FRIEND-A SOLID. POSSIBLY RATHER STOLID. FRIEND: WITH THAT COMMODITY HE was prepared to provide her. Any sign of agitation in her he answered AND HOPED TO QUIET BY AN INCREASED CALM IN HIS OWN MANNER. THE HUMBLEST OF MEN HAVE MOMENTS OF PRIDE. IT MUST BE CONFESSED THAT BOB THOUGHT HE WAS BEHAVING NOT ONLY WITH PROPER FEELING BUT ALSO WITH CONSIDERABLE TACT-A TACT THAT WAS BASED ON KNOWLEDGE OF women INTERVIEWS SUCH AS THESE-AND THEY WERE NOT INFREQUENT-FORMED A RATHER INCONGRUOUS BACKGROUND, BUT ALSO AN UNDENABLE RELIEF, TO THE LIFE JANIE WAS LEADING AT FAIRHOLME. THAT SHEWED TO HAVE LITTLE CONCERN WITH BOB BROADLEY AND TO BE ENGROSSED IN THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN HARRY AND DURLAY, BOTH MEN PRESSED ON HARRY HAD NOT BEEN SCARED AWAY. DUPLAY WOULD WIN WITHOUT USING HIS SECRET WEAPON, IF HE COULD. EACH HAD HIS MANNER: HARRY'S CONSTRAINED YET DIRECT: THE MAJOR'S MORE FLORID. MORE EXPRESSED IN GLANCES, COMPLIMENTS, AND ATTENTIONS. NETHER HAD YET RISKED THE DECISIVE WORD. JANIE WAS PLAYING FOR DELAY. THE MAJOR SEEVED INCLINED TO GRANT IT HER: HE WOULD MAKE EVERY STEP FIRM UNDER HIM BEFORE HE TOOK ANOTHER FORWARD. BUT HARRY GREW IMPATIENT, WAS IMPERIOUS IN HIS CALLS ON HER TIME, AND MIGHT FACE HER WITH THE DEWAND FOR AN ANSWER ANY DAY. SHE COULD NOT

EXPLAIN HOW IT WAS, BUT SOMEHOW HIS CONDUCT SEEMED TO BE INFLUENCED BY THE PROGRESS OF LADY TRISTRAM'S ILLNESS. SHE GATHERED. THIS IDEA FROM WORDS HE LET FALL: PERHAPS HIS MOTHER WANTED TO SEE THE AFFAIR SETTLED BEFORE SHE DIED. DUPLAY OFTEN SPOKE OF THE ILLNESS TOO: IT could have no importance for him at least, she thought. ABOUT HARRY TRISTRAM ANYHOW SHE WAS RIGHT. HE WAS USING TO ITS FULL VALUE HIS RIVAL'S CHIVALROUS DESIRE TO MAKE NO MOVEMENT DURING LADY TRISTRAM'S LIFETIME, HE RECKONED ON IT AND MEANT TO PROFIT BY IT. THE

MAJOR HAD INDEED CONVEYED TO HIM THAT THE CHVALRY HAD ITS LIMITS; EVEN

sure of being furnished with this aid. HE CAME TO FAIRHOLME A DAY OR TWO AFTER JANIE HAD TALKED WITH BOB BROADLEY, SHE WAS ON THE LAWN: WITH HER MINA ZABRISKA AND A SMALL. NEAT. ELDERLY MAN. WHO WAS INTRODUCED TO HIM AS MR JEWKINSON NEELD. HARRY PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO THIS INSIGNIFICANT PERSON, AND GAVE MINA NO MORE THAN A CARRIESS SHAKE OF THE HAND AND A GOOD-HUMORED. AMUSED NOD: HE WAS NOT AFRAID OF HER ANY LONGER. SHE HAD DONE WHAT HARM SHE COULD. IF SHE DID ANYTHING MORE NOW IT WOULD BE ON HIS SIDE. ELSE WHY HAD HE SHOWN HER LADY TRISTRAM? HE CLAIMED JANIE AND contrived to lead her to some chairs on the other side of the lawn. "AND THAT'S MR HARRY TRISTRAM?" SAID NEELD, LOOKING AT HIM INTENTLY through his spectacles. "YES." SAID THE IMP BRIEFLY—SHE WAS AT THE MOMENT RATHER BORED BY Mr. Neeld. "An interesting-looking young man." "YES. HE'S INTERESTING." AND SHE ADDED A MOMENT LATER, "YOU'RE HAVING a good look at him, Mr Neeld."

"DEAR ME, WAS I STARING? I HOPE NOT. BUT-WELL, WE'VE ALL HEARD OF HIS

"I'M AFRAID THE NEXT THING WE HEAR ABOUT HER WILL BE THE LAST." WHAT SHE

mother, you know."

IF THAT WERE SO, HARRY WOULD BE NO WORSE OFF; AND THERE WAS THE CHANCE THAT DURLAY WOULD NOT SPEAK. A LOOK OF BRUTALITY WOULD BE GIVEN TO ANY ACTION OF HIS WHILE LADY TRISTRAM LAY DYING; HARRY HOPED THIS ASPECT OF HIS CONDUCT WOULD FRIGHTEN HM. AT LEAST IT WAS WORTH RISKING. THE DOCTORS TALKED OF TWO MONTHS MORE; HARRY TRISTRAM MEANT TO BE BNGAGED BEFORE ONE OF THEM WAS OUT. COULD HE BE MARRIED BEFORE THE SECOND RAN ITS COURSE? MIRS WER WOULD HAVE SCOFFED AT THE IDEA, AND JANE SHRUNK FROM IT. BUT A DYING MOTHER'S AFFEAL WOULD COUNT WITH ALMOST PRESISTIBLE STRENGTH IN SUCH A CASE. AND HARRY WAS

Tristram will succeed to his throne soon now."

NEELD LOOKED AT HER AS IF HE WERE ABOUT TO SPEAK, BUT HE SAID NOTHING,

HAD SEEN AT BLENT HALL WAS IN HER MIND AND SHE SPOKE SADLY. "MR.

and his eyes wandered back to Harry again.
"Thev're friends—Miss Iver and he?" he asked at last.

"Oh, it's no secret that he wants to marry her."

"A pleasant society at Heidelberg, I dare say?"

"And does she----?"

Mina Laugheb, not very naturally. "It's something to be Lady Tristram of Blent." She smled to think how much more her words meant to

HERSELF THAN THEY COULD MEAN TO HER COMPANION. SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN AMAZED TO FIND THAT NEELD WAS THINKING THAT SHE WOULD NOT SPEAK SO

AMAZED TO FIND THAT NEED WAS THINKING THAT SHE WOULD NOT SPEAK SO lightly if she knew what he did.

HARRY WANTED TO MARRY JANIE IVER! WITH A SUDDEN REVULSION OF FEELING.

HARRY WANTED TO MARRY JANE IVER! WITH A SUDDEN REVULSION OF FEELING NEELD HINSELF FAR FROM BLENTIMOUTH. HOWEVER IT WAS HS DUTY TO TALK TO THIS SHARP LITTLE FOREIGN WOMAN, AND HE MEANT TO TRY. A FEW POLITE questions brought him to the point of inquiring her nationality.

"OH, WE'RE SWISS, FRENCH SWISS. BUT I WAS BORN AT HEIDELBERG. MY MOTHER LIVED THERE AFTER MY FATHER DIED. MY UNCLE—WHO LIVES WITH ME —Major Duplay, is her brother; he was in the Swiss Service."

"Rather Dull," sad Mina. It seeved much the same at Blentimouth at the moment.

the moment.

WER STROLLED OUT FROM HS STUDY ON TO THE LAWN. HE CAST A GLANCE TOWARD his day letter and Harry frowned slightly, and sat down on Mina's other.

his daughter and Harry, frowned slightly, and sat down on Mina's other SIDE. HE HAD A NEWSPAFER IN HIS HAND, AND HE HELD IT UP AS HE SPOKE TO Neeld across Mina

"Your book's promised for the 15th, I see, Neeld," "Yes. it's to be out then." MINA WAS DELIGHTED AT BEING PRESENTED WITH A TOPIC. SOMETIMES IT IS the most precious of aifts. "OH, MR NEELD, HAVE YOU WRITTEN A BOOK? HOW INTERESTING! WHAT IS IT? A novel?" "MY DEAR MADAME ZABRISKA!" MURMURED NEELD. FEELING AS IF HE WERE being made fun of, "And it's not really my book, I've only edited it." "BUT THAT'S JUST AS GOOD." MINA INSISTED AMABLY. "DO TELL ME WHAT IT is." "HERE YOU ARE, MINA. THERE'S THE FULL TITLE AND DESCRIPTION FOR YOU. THERE'S NOTHING IT SE IN THE PAPER" IVER HANDED IT TO HER WITH A STIELED. vawn. She read and turned to Neeld with a guick jerk of her head. "JOURNAL AND CORRESPONDENCE OF JOSIAH CHOLDERTON!" SHE REPEATED. "Oh. BUT-OH. BUT-WELL. THAT IS CURIOUS! WHY, WE USED TO KNOW MR Cholderton!" "YOU KNEW MR CHOLDERTON?" SAID MR NEELD IN MILD SURPRISE. THEN, WITH a recollection, he added, "Oh, at Heidelberg, I dare say? But you must have been a child?" "Yes, I was. Does he talk about Heidelberg?" "HE MENTIONS IT ONCE OR TWICE." IN SPITE OF HIMSELF NEELD BEGAN TO FEEL THAT HE WAS WITHIN MEASURABLE DISTANCE OF GETTING ON TO DIFFICULT ground. "What fun if he mentioned me! Oh, but of course he wouldn't say anything about a child of five!" THE SLIGHTEST START RAN THROUGH NEELD'S FIGURE, IT PASSED UNNOTICED. HE

TIME, SHE HAD NO REASON TO THINK THAT CHOLDERTON HAD BEEN IN POSSESSION OF ANY SECRETS, AND IF HE HAD, IT WOULD NOT HAVE COOURRED to her that he would record them.

"HE KNEW MY MOTHER QUITE WELL; HE USED TO COME AND SEE US. DOES he mention her—Madame de Kries?"

There was a perceptible pause; then Neeld answered primly:

"I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T FIND YOUR MOTHER'S NAME MENTIONED IN MR. Cholderton'S Journal, Madame Zabriska."

"HOW HORRIC!" REWARKED MINA, GREATLY DISAPPOINTED; SHE REGARDED MR Neeld with a new interest all the same.

THEY WERE BOTH STRUCK WITH THIS STRANGE COINCIDENCE—AS IT SEEVED TO THEM, THOUGH IN FACT THAT THEY SHOULD MEET AT BLENTMOUTH WAS NOT PROPERTY A COINCIDENCE AT ALL. THERE WAS NOTIFING SURPRISING ABOUT IT:

LOOKED SHARPLY AT MINA ZABRISKA. SHE WENT ON, IN ALL INNOCENCE THIS

THE SAME CAUSE AND SIMILAR IMPULSES HAD BROUGHT THEM BOTH THERE.

The woman who lay dying at Blent and the young man who sat making

LOVE UNDER THE TREE YONDER—THESE AND NO MORE FAR-FETCHED CAUSES—

HAD BROUGHT THEM BOTH WHERE THEY WERE. MINA KNEW THE TRUTH ABOUT

HERSELF. NEELD ABOUT HIMSELF: NETHER KNEW OR GUESSED IT ABOUT THE

OTHER. HENCE THER WONDER AND THER UNREASONABLE FEELING THAT THERE was something of a fate bringing them together in that place.

"You're sure he says nothing about us?" she urged.
"You'rL NOT FIND A WORD," HE REPLIED, STICKING TO THE FORM OF ASSERTION

"You'll not find a word," He repuled, sticking to the form of assertic that salved his conscience. He looked across the lawn again, but Janie and Harry had disappeared amongst the bushes.

"YOU'RE SORT OF OLD ACQUAINTANCES AT SECOND-HAND, THEN," SAID IVER, smilling. "Cholderton's the connecting link."

smiling. "Cholderton's the connecting link."

"He didn't like me," remarked Mina. "He used to call me the lmp."

"You don't seem much surprised!" cried Mina in mock indignation.
"Surerised?" He started More Violently, "Oh, yes—I—— Of course!

"YES. YES," SAID NEELD IN ABSENT-MINDED ACQUIESCENCE. "YES, THE

lmp."

I'm——" A laugh from his host spared him the effort of further apologies. But he was a good deal shaken; he had nearly betrayed his knowledge of the Imp. Indeed he could not rid himself of the Idea

THAT THERE WAS A VERY INQUISITIVE LOOK IN MADAME ZABRISKA'S LARGE eyes.

Mina risked one more question, put very carelessly.

"I THINK HE MUST HAVE MET LADY TRISTRAM THERE ONCE OR TWICE. DOES HE say anything about her?"

"Not a word." said Neeld, grasping the nettle firmly this time.

MINA TOOK ANOTHER LOOK AT HIM, BUT HE BLINKED RESOLUTELY BEHIND HS glasses.

"Well, it's just like Mr Cholderton to leave out all the interesting things."

SHE OBSERVED RESIGNEDLY. "ONLY I WONDER WHY YOU EDIT HIS BOOK IF IT'S like that, you know."
"Hello, what's that?" exclaimed Iver, suddenly sitting up in his chair.

They heard the sound of a horse's Galloping on the road outside. The noise of the hoofs storped suddenly. They sat listening. In a minute or two the butler led a groom in the Tristram Livery on to the lawn. He came quickly across to Iver, touching his hat.

"Bes pardon, sir, but could I see Mr Tristram? I've an important message for him."

AT THE SAME MOMENT JANIE AND HARRY TRISTRAM CAME OUT ON TO THE

following.
"Well, Sam, what is it? You were riding hard."
"Her Ladyshe has had a relarse. Sr. and Dr. Fryer croered we to rice.

GRASS. HARRY SAW THE GROOM AND WAS WITH THEM IN A MOMENT. JANIE

over and tell you at once. No time to lose, he said, sir."

"Did you bring a horse for me?"

"No, sir. But I'm riding Quilldriver." "I'LL GO BACK ON HIM YOU CAN WALK." HE TURNED TO THE REST. "I MUST GO AT

once," he said. "I don't know what this may mean."
"Not so BAD AS IT SOUNDS, I HOPE," SAID IVER. "BUT YOU'D BEST BE OFF AT

once."

HARRY INCLUDED MINA AND MR NEELD IN ONE LIGHT NOD, AND WALKED BRISKLY
TOWARD THE GATE, IVER AND JANIE ACCOMPANYING HIM. MINA AND NEELD
were left together, and sat in silence some moments.

"It sounds as if she was dying," said Mina at last in a low voice.
"Yes, poor woman!"

"I saw her once lately. She was very beautiful, Mr Neeld."

"Yes, yes, to her own great trouble, poor thing!"
"You knew about——?"

"Oh. evervbody knew. Madame Zabriska."

"Yes. AND NOW SHE'S DYING!" SHE TURNED TO HIM. LOOKING HIM FAIRLY IN

the face. "And Harryll be Tristram of Blent," she said.
"Yes." said Neeld. "He'll be Tristram of Blent."

BOTH FELL INTO SILENCE AGAIN, LOOKING ABSENTLY AT THE SUNSHINE FLAYING AMONG THE TREES. THEY WERE NOT TO SHARE THEIR SECRET JUST YET. A LINK was missing between them still.

HARRY CAME TO WHERE THE HORSE WAS, AND STOOD THERE FOR A MOMENT,

while the groom altered the stirrups to suit him.
"It's the beginning of the end, if not the end itself," he said.

"Our earnest good wishes to her."

"My love," said Janie. Her father glanced quickly at her.

"He won't spare the horse," said Iver.

HARRY JUMPED INTO THE SADDLE, WAVED HIS HAND TO THEM, AND STARTED AT A CALLOP FOR BLENT. THE GROOM, WITH ANOTHER TOUCH OF HIS HAT, TRUCGED

OFF IN HIS MASTER'S TRACK. JANE IVER STOOD LOOKING AS LONG AS HARRY WAS in sight.

"Well, he can't this time, and anyhow he wouldn't, if he wanted to get there." She took her father's arm and pressed it. "Father, Harry Tristiram has just asked me to marry him. He said Lady Tristiram

TRISTRAM HAS JUST ASKED ME TO MARRY HIM. HE SAID LADY TRISTRAM WANTED IT SETTLED BEFORE—BEFORE SHE DIED, OR HE WOULDN'T HAVE spoken so soon."

"Well, Janie dear?"

"When the groom came, I had just told him that I would give him an answer in a week. But now!" She made a gesture with her free hand; it seemed to mean bewilderwent. She could not tell what would happen now.

VIII

Duty and Mr. Neeld

When Mina Zabriska brought back the news from Fairholme, and announced it with an intensity of significance which the sudden aggravation of an illness long known to be mortal harbly accounted for, Major Durlay grew very solemn. The moment for action approached, and the nearer it came, the less was the Major satisfied.

WITH HIS POSITION AND RESOURCES. THE SCENE BY THE POOL HAD TAUGHT HIM THAT HE WOULD HAVE A STIFF FIGHT. HE HAD BEEN HARD HIT BY HARRY'S SHREWD SUGGESTION THAT HE MUST ASK IVER HIMSELE FOR THE MEANS OF PROVING WHAT HE MEANT TO TELL IVER. THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE, HOWEVER, WAS TO PROCURE MONEY FOR THE NECESSARY INVESTIGATIONS FROM HIS NIECE. AND HIS NIECE, THOUGH COMFORTABLY OFF, WAS NOT RICH. NOR WAS SHE ANY LONGER ZEALOUS IN THE CAUSE. THE MP WAS SULKY AND SULLEN WITH HIM. SORRY SHE HAD EVER TOUCHED THE AFFAIR AT ALL. READY. HE SUSPECTED. TO GRASP AT ANY EXCLISE FOR LETTING IT DROP. THIS TEMPER OF HERS FOREBODED. A REFUSAL TO OPEN HER PURSE. IT WAS SERIOUS IN ANOTHER WAY, OF HIMSELF Duplay knew nothing; Mina was his only witness; her evidence, though REALLY SECOND-HAND, WAS UNDOUBTEDLY WEIGHTY; IT WOULD AT LEAST MAKE INCLURIES NECESSARY. BUT WOULD SHE GIVE IT? DURLAY WAS CONSCIOUS THAT SHE WAS CAPABLE OF TURNING ROUND ON HIM AND DECLARING THAT SHE HAD MADE A BLUNDER. IF SHE DID THAT, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN? DUPLAY WAS SURE THAT HARRY HAD FORMAL PROOFS. GOOD AND VALID prima facie: HE WOULD NEED MINA. MONEY. AND TIME TO UPSET THEM. THERE WERE moments when the Major himself wished that he had relied on his own ATTRACTIONS. AND NOT CHALLENGED HARRY TO BATTLE ON ANY ISSUE SAVE THEIR RESPECTIVE POWER TO WIN JANIE IVER'S AFFECTIONS. BUT IT SEEMED TOO LATE

POOL RANKLED. HARRY, AS USUAL, HAD SPARED HIS ENEMY NONE OF THE BITTERNESS OF DEFEAT: DUPLAY WOULD NOW TAKE PLEASURE IN HUMBLING HIM FOR THE SAKE OF THE TRIUMPH ITSELF, APART FROM ITS EFFECT ON THE IVERS. FATHER AND DAUGHTER BUT COULD HE DO IT? HE ABODE BY THE CONCLUSION that he was bound to try, but he was not happy in it. Harry's attitude would be simple. He would at the proper time produce his certificates, testifying to the death of Sir Randolph, the marriage of HIS PARENTS. HIS OWN BIRTH. THE COPIES WERE IN PERFECT ORDER AND DULY AUTHENTICATED: THEY WERE EVIDENCE IN THEMSELVES: THE ORIGINALS COULD BE HAD AND WOULD BEAR OUT THE COPIES. ALL THIS HAD BEEN WELL LOOKED. AFTER, AND DUPLAY DID NOT DOUBT IT. WHAT HAD HE TO SET AGAINST IT? ONLY THAT THE THRO CERTIFICATE WAS FALSE. AND THAT SOMEWHERE—NEITHER HE NOR EVEN MINA KNEW WHERE—BEARING SOME DATES—NETTHER HE NOR MINA KNEW WHAT-THERE MUST BE TWO OTHER CERTIFICATES—ONE FATAL TO HARRY'S CASE AS FIXING HIS BIRTH AT AN EARLIER DATE. THE OTHER THROWING AT LEAST GRAVE SUSPICION ON IT BY RECORDING A SECOND CEREMONY OF MARRIAGE. BUT WHERE WERE THESE CERTIFICATES? CONCEIVABLY THEY HAD BEEN DESTROYED: THAT WAS NOT LIKELY. BUT IT WAS POSSIBLE, AT ANY RATE, TO FIND THEM WOULD NEED MUCH TIME AND SOME MONEY. ON REFLECTION, THE Major could not blame Harry for defying him by the Pool. IT WILL BE SEEN THAT THE INFORMATION WHICH MINA HAD GLEANED FROM HER MOTHER, AND FILLED IN FROM HER OWN CHILDISH RECOLLECTION, WAS NOT SO MINUTE IN THE MATTER OF DATES AS THAT WHICH MADAME DE KRIES HAD GIVEN AT THE TIME OF THE EVENTS TO MR CHOLDERTON, AND WHICH WAS NOW LOCKED AWAY IN THE DRAWER AT MR JENKINSON NEELD'S CHAMBERS. THE MAJOR WOULD HAVE BEEN MATERIALLY ASSISTED BY A SIGHT OF THAT DOCUMENT: IT WOULD HAVE NARROWED THE NECESSARY AREA OF INQUIRY AND GIVEN A DEFINITENESS TO HIS ASSERTIONS WHICH MUST HAVE CARRIED ADDED

WEIGHT WITH MR IVER. AS IT WAS, HE BEGAN TO BE CONVINCED THAT MINA WOULD DECLINE TO REVIEWBER ANY DATES EVEN APPROXIMATELY, AND THIS WAS ALL SHE HAD PROFESSED TO DO IN HER FIRST DISCLOSURE. DUPLAY

TO GO BACK. BESIDES. HE WAS IN A RAGE WITH HARRY: HIS DEFEAT BY THE

adversary.

Mina, Being Sulky, would not talk to her uncle; she could not talk to
Jane Iver; she did not see Harry, and would not have dared to talk to
him is she had. But it in the hardly be said that she was dying to talk to

ACKNOWLEDGED THAT, AS MATTERS STOOD, THE BETTING WAS IN FAVOR OF HIS

SOMEBODY. WITH SUCH MATTERS ON HAND, SHE STRUGGLED AGAINST SILENCE
LIKE SODA-WATER AGAINST THE CORK. MERELY TO STARE DOWN AT BLENT AND
WONDER WHAT WAS HAPPENING THERE WHETTED A O BROSTLY IT COLLD NOT

SATISFY. SHE FELT OUT OF THE GAME, AND THE FEELING WAS INTOLERABLE. AS A LAST RESORT, IN A LAST EFFORT TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH IT, ALTHOUGH SHE HAD BEEN WARNED THAT SHE WOULD FIND NOTHING OF INTEREST TO HER IN THE VOLUME. SHE TELEGRAPHED TO A BOOKSELLER IN LONDON TO SEND HER MR.

CHOLDERTON'S JOURNAL. IT CAME THE DAY AFTER IT WAS PUBLISHED, FOUR DAYS AFTER SHE HAD MADE MR NEELD'S ACQUAINTANCE, AND WHILE LADY TRISTRAM, CONTRARY TO EXPECTATION, STILL HELD DEATH AT ARM'S LENGTH AND

LAY LOOKING AT HER OWN PICTURE. THE NEXT MORNING NEELD RECEIVED A PRESSING INVITATION TO GO TO TEA AT MERRION LODGE. WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESTIATION HE WENT; WITH HIM TOO ALL RESOLUTIONS TO KNOW AND TO CARE NOTHING FURTHER ABOUT THE MATTER VANISHED BEFORE THE FIRST CHANCE OF

seeing more of it. And Mina had been Mina de Kries.

SHE RECEIVED HIM IN THE LIBRARY; THE JOURNAL LAY ON THE TABLE.

SOMETHING HAD RESTORED ANIMATION TO HER MANNER AND MALICE TO HER.

SOMETHING HAD RESTORED ANIMATION TO HER MANNER AND MALICE TO HER
EYES; THOSE WHO KNEW HER WELL WOULD HAVE CONJECTURED THAT SHE SAW
HER WAY TO MAKING SOMEBODY UNCOMFORTABLE. BUT THERE WAS ALSO AN
UNDERLYING NERVOUSNESS WHICH SEEVED TO HINT AT SOMETHING BEYOND.

UNDERLYING NEWOUSNESS WHICH SEEMED TO HINT AT SOMETHING BEYOND.

SHE BEGAN BY FLATTERING HER VISITOR OUTRAGEOUSLY AND INDULGING IN A
NUMBER OF FALSE STATEMENTS REGARDING HER DELIGHT WITH THE JOURNAL AND
THE AMUSEMENT AND INSTRUCTION SHE HAD GAINED FROM IT; SHE EVEN
PROFESSED TO HAVE MASTERED THE HYGROXERIC METHOD. OBSERVING THAT A

PROFESSED TO HAVE MASTERED THE HYGROXERIC METHOD, OBSERVING THAT A NOTE BY THE EDITOR PUT THE WHOLE THING IN A NUTSHELL. MUCH PLEASED, YET VAGUELY DISAPPOINTED, MR NEELD CONCLUDED THAT SHE HAD NO MORE TO say about the visit to Heidelberg.

"I SEE YOU PUT LITTLE ASTERSK THINGS WHERE YOU LEAVE OUT ANYTHING," SHE observed. "That's convenient, isn't it?"

"I think it's usual" said he.

The Imp turned over the pages leisurely while Neeld sipped his tea.

"And another thing you do—Oh, you really are a splendid editor!—you put the date at the top of every page—even where Mr Cholderton's entry runs over ever so many pages. He is rather long sometimes, isn't he?"

"I'VE ALWAYS FOUND THE DATE AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE A CONVENENCE IN reading myself," said Mr Neeld.

"YES, IT TELLS YOU JUST WHERE YOU ARE—AND WHERE MR CHOLDERTON WAS."

SHE LAUCHED A LITTLE. "YES, LOOK HERE, PAGE 365, MAY 1875, HE'S AT

BERUN! THEN THERE ARE SOME ASTERISKS"—MR NEELD LOOKED UP FROM HIS
TEA—"AND YOU TURN OVER THE PAGE" (THE IMP TURNED OVER WITH THE AIR OF
A DISCOVERER), "AND YOU... FIND HIM AT INTER AKEN IN—WHY, IN AUGUST, MR

NEED!" AN AMABLE SURPRISE AFFEARED ON HER FACE. "WHERE WAS HE IN between?" she asked.
"I—I suppose he stayed at Berlin."
"OH, PERHAPS. NO—LOOK HERE. HE SAYS, "I HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY MET SIR SILAS MINTING. AS I LEFT BERLIN BEFORE HE ARRIVED IN THE BEGINNING OF

THE IMP LAID DOWN THE JOURNAL, LEANT BACK IN HER CHAIR, AND REGARDED Neeld steadily.

June."

Heidelbera."

"YOU TOLD ME RIGHT," SHE ADDED; "I DON'T FIND ANY MENTION OF MY MOTHER
—NOR OF HEIDELBERG. It'S RATHER FUNNY THAT HE DOESN'T MENTION

SHE POURED OUT A SECOND OUP OF TEA AND—WAITED. THE FIRST PART OF HER

"BECAUSE," SHE ADDED, AFTER SHE HAD GIVEN HER FREVIOUS REMARKS
TIME TO SOAK IN, "BETWEEN MAY AND AUGUST 1875 IS JUST ABOUT THE TIME
I REMEMBER HIM AT HEIDELBERG—THE TIME WHEN HE MET MRS FITZHUBERT,
you know."

SHE NODDED HER HEAD SLIGHTLY TOWARD THE WINDOW, THE WINDOW THAT
LOCKED DOWN TO THE VALLEY AND GAVE A VIEW OF THE HOUSE WHERE LADY
Tristram lay. Mina was keenly excited now. Had the Journal told Neeld
anything? Was that the meaning of his asterisks?

WORK WAS DONE. SHE HAD MADE NEED VERY LINCOMFORTABLE

NOTHING OF PUBLIC INTEREST, MADAME ZABRISKA, AND IN MY DISCRETION I omitted it."

"WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT THE OTHER DAY? YOU GAVE ME TO UNDERSTAND that he only mentioned Heidelberg casually."

"I may have expressed myself——"

"THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT HIS VISIT TO HEIDELBERG, BUT IT CONTAINED

"And did he mention us?"

Neeld rose to his feet and took a turn up and down the room.

"In My DISCRETION I LEFT THE PASSAGE OUT. I CAN ANSWER NO QUESTIONS about it. Please don't press me. Madame Zabriska."

"I will know," she said excitedly, almost angrily.

NEELD CAME TO A STAND OPPOSITE HER, DEEP PERPLEXITY EXPRESSING ITSELF in his look and manner.

"Did be talk about us? Did be talk about Lady Triatrom?"

"Did he talk about us? Did he talk about Lady Tristram?"

"I am speaking to you, and to you only, Madame Zabriska?"

"Yes, yes—to me only."

"He did mention you, and he did speak of Lady Tristram." "THAT'S WHY YOU WEREN'T SURPRISED WHEN I TOLD YOU HE CALLED ME THE IMP!" SHE SMLED A MOMENT, AND NEELD SMLED TOO, BUT IN AN INSTANT she was eager again, "And about Lady Tristram?"

"It was no use reprinting foor Lady Tristram's story." He sat down AGAIN, TRYING TO LOOK AS THOUGH THE SUBJECT WERE DONE WITH: BUT HE RUBBED HIS HANDS TOGETHER NERVOUSLY AND WOULD NOT MEET MINA'S EYES THERE WAS A LONG PAUSE. MINA ROSE, TOOK THE JOURNAL, PUT IT IN THE

CUPBOARD AND TURNED THE KEY ON IT. SHE CAME BACK AND STOOD OVER him. "You know?" she said. "It was in the Journal? I'm sure you know."

"Know what?" Mr Neeld was fighting in the last ditch. "But I don't want to tell you unless you know! No, I'm sure you know!"

"And do you know?" "Yes. I know. My mother told me."

"YOU MEAN ABOUT HARRY TRISTRAM?" HE ASKED, SIMPLY, BUT IN A LOW voice. "Yes. At first I didn't know what it meant to him. But I know now."

They understood one another now. Neeld made no further pretence.

NEELD MADE NO REPLY. AND THERE WAS ANOTHER MOMENT OF SILENCE. NEELD WORE A RESTLESS. TIMID. UNEASY AIR. IN STRONG CONTRAST TO THE RESOLUTE INTENSITY OF MINA'S MANNER: SHE SEEVED TO HAVE TAKEN AND TO keep the upper hand of him.

"And you know what it would mean to him?" she asked. Neeld nodded: of course he knew that.

HE RAISED HIS HANDS AND LET THEM DROP AGAIN IN A CONFESSION THAT HE did not know "I KNEW, AND I TOLD," SHE SAID. HE STARTED A LITTLE, "YES, I TOLD, BECAUSE I

"What are you going to do?"

"You told? Whom did you tell?"

WAS SPITEFUL. I WAS THE IMP! I'VE NEVER BEEN HAPPY SINCE I TOLD. MR TRISTRAM KNOWS I'VE TOLD. THOUGH HE DENIES THERE'S ANYTHING IN IT. BUT HE knows I've told. And still he's been kind to me." Her voice shook.

"NEVER MND-OR GUESS. IF YOU CAN, I SHAN'T TELL HIM ANY MORE, I SHAN'T HELP HIM ANY MORE. I WON'T SPEAK, I WILL NOT SPEAK, I'M FOR MR TRISTRAM. THICK AND THIN, I'M FOR MR TRISTRAM NOW," SHE CAME A STEP NEARER TO HIM. "THE MAN I TOLD MAY TRY: BUT I DON'T THINK HE CAN DO MUCH WITHOUT US-WITHOUT ME AND WITHOUT YOU. IF WE KEEP QUIET, NO. HE CAN'T DO MUCH WHY SHOULD WE THIL? IS IT OUR BUSINESS? YOU SUPPRESSED IT IN THE

Journal, Can't you suppress it now?" "The lvers?" he stammered. "THE MESS! WHAT'S IT TO THE MESS COMPARED TO WHAT IT IS TO HIM? IT II

NEVER COME OUT. IF IT DID-OH, BUT IT WON'T! IT'S LIFE AND DEATH TO HIM. AND ISN'T IT RIGHT? ISN'T IT JUSTICE? HE'S HER SON, THIS THING'S JUST A

HORRIBLE ACCIDENT. OH, IF YOU'D HEARD HIM SPEAK OF BLENT!" SHE PAUSED A MOMENT, RUBBING HER HAND ACROSS HER EYES. THEN SHE THREW HERSELF back into her chair, asking again, "What are you going to do?" HE SAT SILENT, THINKING HARD, IT WAS NOT HIS BUSINESS. RIGHT AND JUSTICE

LAW. AND THERE WERE HIS FRIENDS THE IVERS. IN HIM THERE WAS NO MOTIVE

SEEMED. IN SOME SENSE AT LEAST, ON HARRY'S SIDE, BUT THE LAW IS THE

OF SELF-INTEREST SUCH AS HAD SWAYED MAJOR DUPLAY AND MADE HIS

ACTION SEEM RATHER LIGLY EVEN TO HIMSELF. NEELD OWED LOYALTY AND FRIENDSHIP, THAT WAS ALL. WAS IT LOYAL, WAS IT FRIENDLY, TO UTTER NO WORD

WHILE FRIBNDS WERE DECEIVED? WITH WHAT FACE WOULD HE GREET IVER IF THE

FOINT THAT MAJOR DUPLAY HAD INVOKED IN DEFENCE OF HIMSELF AGAINST HIS CONSCIENCE. ON THE OTHER SIDE WAS THE STRONG SYMPATHY WHICH THAT STORY IN THE JOURNAL HAD CREATED IN HIM SINCE FIRST HE READ IT, AND REALIZED ITS PERVERSE LITTLE TRAGEDY; AND THERE WAS THE THOUGHT OF LADY Tristram dying down at Blent.

THING DID COME OUT AFTERWARD? HE DEBATED WITH ENTIRE SINCERTY THE

THE LONG SILENCE WAS BROKEN BY NETHER OF THEM NEELD WAS WEIGHING HIS QUESTION; MINA HAD MADE HER APPEAL AND WAITED FOR AN ANSWER. THE QUIET OF THE BOOK-LINED ROOM (THERE WERE THE YELLOWY-BROWN VOLUMES FROM WHICH MINA HAD ACQUIRED HER LORE!) WAS BROKEN BY A

NEW VOICE. THEY BOTH STARTED TO HEAR IT, AND TURNED ALERT FACES TO THE WINDOW WHENCE IT CAME. HARRY TRISTRAM, IN FLANNELS AND A STRAW HAT, stood looking in.

"I'VE GOT AN HOUR OFF," HE EXPLAINED, "SO I WALKED UP TO THANK YOU FOR THE FLOWERS. MY MOTHER LIKED THEM. AND LIKED TO HAVE THEM FROM YOU." HE

SAW NELD, AND GREETED HIM COURTECUSLY. "I ASKED HER IF I SHOULD GIVE YOU HER LOVE, AND SHE SAID YES—WITH HER EYES, YOU KNOW. SHE SHEAKS MOSTLY THAT WAY NOW. WELL, SHE ALWAYS DID A GOOD DEAL, I EXPECT." His smile came on the last words.

"She sent her love to me?"

"Yes. I told her what you did one evening, and she liked that too."

MINA INVITED HIM IN; THERE WAS AN APPOSITENESS IN HIS COMING WHICH appealed to her, and she watched Neeld with covert eagerness.

"She doesn't suffer, thank you."

"I hope Lady Tristram is—er—going on well?" asked Neeld.

Harry looked round the room, then vaulted over the sill.

arry looked round the room, then vaulted over the sill.

"My uncle's playing golf with Mr Iver," remarked Mina. "Tea?"

SO LATELY LAIN. "MY MOTHER'S AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN." HE WENT ON. EVIDENTLY SO FULL OF HIS THOUGHT THAT HE MUST SPEAK IT OUT: "SHE'S DYING iovfullv." AFTER AN INSTANT MINA ASKED. "WHY?" NEELD WAS SURPRISED AT THE baldness of the question, but Harry took it as natural. "It's like going off guard—I mean, rather, off duty—to her, I think," He MADE THE CORRECTION THOUGHTFULLY AND WITH NO HASTE. "LIFE HAS ALWAYS SEEMED RATHER LIKE AN OBLIGATION TO DO THINGS YOU DON'T WANT TO-NOT THAT SHE DID THEM ALL—AND NOW SHE'S TIRED. SHE'S GLAD TO LEAVE IT TO me. Only she wishes I was a bit better-looking, though she won't admit IT. SHE COULDN'T STAND A DOWNRIGHT LIGHY MAN AT BLENT, YOU KNOW, I'VE A SORT OF NOTION"—HE SEEMED TO FORGET NEELD. AND LOOKED AT MINA FOR SYMPATHY—"THAT SHE THINKS SHE'LL BE ABLE TO COME AND HAVE A LOOK AT Blent and me in it, all the same." His smile took a whimsical turn as he spoke of his mother's dying fancies. MINA GLANCED AT MR NEELD: WAS THE PICTURE VISIBLE TO HIM THAT ROSE

"No; too sick-roomy. I'm for nothing but strong drink now—and I've had some." He came to the middle of the room and stood between them. Flinging his hat on the table where Mr Cholderton's Journal had

MINA GLANDED AT MIR NIEELD, WAS THE HOUGHE VISIBLE TO HIM THAT HOSE BEFORE HER EYES—OF THE POOR SPRITE COMING BAGERLY, BUT TURNING SADLY AWAY WHEN SHE SAW A STRANGER BRITHRONDED AT BLENT, AND KNEW NOT WHENE TO LOOK FOR HER HOWELESS, LANDLESS SON? MINA WAS NOT CERTIAN THAT SHE COULD SAFELY CREDIT NEELD WITH SUCH A FLIGHT OF MAGINATION; STILL HE WAS LISTENING, AND HIS EYES WERE VERY GENTLE BEHIND HIS SPECTACLES.

"The parson came to see her yesterday. He's not what you'd call an unusual man, Madame Zabriska—and she is an unusual woman, you know. It was—yes, it was amusing, and there's an end of it." He

PAUSED, AND ADDED, BY WAY OF EXCUSE, "OH, I KNOW HER SO WELL, YOU SEE. SHE WOULDN'T BE LEFT ALONE WITH HIM, SHE WANTED ANOTHER SINNER there."

"I BEG YOUR PARDON FOR TROUBLING YOU WITH ALL THIS, MR NEELD," HE SAID,
RELAPSING RATHER INTO HIS DEPENSIVE ATTITUDE: "MADAME ZABRISKA KNOWS
my ways."

"No, I DON'T THINK I KNOW THIS NEW WAY OF YOURS AT ALL," SHE OBJECTED.
"BUT I LIKE IT. MR TRISTRAM, I FEEL ALL YOU DO. I HAVE SEEN HER." SHE TURNED

HER EARNESTNESS STIRRED A LITTLE CURIOSITY IN HARRY. HE GLANCED WITH HIS OLD WARINESS AT NEELD. BUT WHAT COULD HE SEE SAVE A KINDLY PRECISE OILD GRAIT BYAIN. WHO WAS LINIMPORTANT TO HIM BUT SEPHIRD INTERESTED IN

MINA MARKED THE CHANGE IN HIM—THE NEW EXPANSIVENESS, THE NEW APPEAL FOR SYMPATHY. HE HAD FORGOTTEN HIS SUSPICION AND HIS WATCHFULNESS; SHE WAS INCLINED TO SAY THAT HE HAD FORGOTTEN HINSELF. ON HER DEATH-BED ADDIE TRISTRAM HAD EXERTED HER CHARM CNOCE MORE——AND OVER HER OWN SON. ONCE MORE A MAN, WHATEVER HIS OWN POSITION, THOUGHT MAINLY OF HER—AND THAT MAN WAS HER SON. DID NEELD SEE THIS? TO NIELD IT CAME AS THE STRONGEST REINFORGEMENT TO THE FEELINGS WHICH BADE HIM HOLD HIS PEACE. IT SEEMED AN APPEAL TO HIM, STRAIGHT FROM THE DEATH-BED IN THE VALLEY BELOW. HARRY FOLIND THE CLID

gentleman's gaze fixed intently on him.

to Neeld. "Oh. how I wish you had!" she cried.

what he said. He turned back to Mina, asking:

"A new way of mine?"

"Well, NOT QUITE. YOU WERE RATHER LIKE IT ONCE. BUT GENERALLY YOU'VE GOT a veil before your face. Or perhaps you're really changed?"

HE THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT. "THINGS CHANGE A MAN." AND HE ADDED, "I'M only twenty-two."

"Yes, I know," she smiled, "though I constantly forget it all the same."

"Well, Twenty-Three, come the twentieth of July," said he. His eyes were on hers, his characteristic smile on his lips. It was a challenge to

"I SHAN'T FORGET THE DATE." SHE ANSWERED, ANSWERING HIS LOOK TOO, HE sighed lightly: he was assured that she was with him. THE TWENTIETH OF JULY! THE EDITOR OF MR CHOLDERTON'S JOURNAL SAT BY listening: he raised no voice in protest. "I must get back," said Harry, "Walk with me to the dip of the hill," WITH A GLANCE OF APOLOGY TO NEELD. SHE FOLLOWED HIM AND STEPPED OUT OF THE WINDOW: THERE WERE TWO STEPS AT THE SIDE LEADING UP TO IT. "I'LL BE BACK DIRECTLY." SHE CRIED OVER HER SHOULDER, AS SHE JOINED HARRY Tristram. They walked to the gate which marked the end of the terrace on which Merrion stood "I'm so glad you came! You do believe in me now?" she asked. "YES, AND I'M NOT AFRAID. BUT DO YOU KNOW—IT SEEMS INCREDIBLE TO ME —I'M NOT THINKING OF THAT NOW. I SHALL AGAIN DIRECTLY, WHEN IT'S OVER, BUT now-well, Blent won't seem much without my mother." "SHE COULDN'T REST IF YOU WEREN'T THERE," CRIED MINA, THROWING BACK THE impression she had received, as her disposition made her. "I HAVEN'T CHANGED ABOUT THAT, BUT IT WILL WAIT. THREE DAYS THEY SAY NOW —three days, or maybe four, and then—she goes." Together they stood, looking down, Mina's heart was very full. She WAS WITH THE TRISTRAMS INDEED NOW. THICK AND THIN: THEIR CAUSE seemed hers, their house must stand.

her.

"SAY NOTHING OF THS TO THE MAJOR. LET HIM ALONE, THAT'S BEST. WE'LL SEE about all that afterward. Good-by."

"And—and the Ivers?" She could not restrain the question.

Harry turned to her suddenly.

- A SLIGHT FROWN CAME ON HIS BROW, HE SEEMED TO HAVE NO RELISH FOR THE subject.

 "OH, THAT'LL WAIT TOO," HE SAID IMPATIENTLY. HE CAUGHT HER BY THE ARM AS
- HE HAD DONE ONCE BEFORE. "IF ALL THEY SAID WAS TRUE, IF WHAT YOU THINK WAS TRUE (HE SMLED AT HER AS HE SPOKE), I'D CHANGE WITH NO MAN IN ENGLAND; REMEMBER THAT. IF IT COMES TO A FIGHT AND I'M BEATEN, remember that." And he ran down the hill.

MINA RETURNED SLOWLY TO THE LIBRARY AND FOUND NEELD WALKING RESTLESSLY TO AND FRO. FOR THE MOMENT THEY DID NOT SPEAK. MINA SAT DOWN AND followed the old gentleman's figure in its restless pacing.

- "You heard him about his mother?" she asked at last.
- He nodded, but did not reply.
- "You make all the difference," she blurted out after another pause.

 AGAIN HE NODDED, NOT CEASING HIS WALK. FOR A MINUTE OR TWO LONGER
 MINA BRURED THE SUSPENSE, THOUGH IT SEEMED MORE THAN SHE COULD

 BEAR. TURN SHE SERVIC
- BEAR THEN SHE SPRANG UP, RAN TO HIM, INTERCEPTED HIM, AND CAUCHT HOLD OF BOTH HS HANDS, ARRESTING HS PROGRESS WITH AN EAGER, Imperious grip.
- "Well?" she cried. "Well? What are you going to do?"
- For a moment still he waited. Then he spoke deliberately.
- "I can't consider it my duty to do anything, Madame Zabriska."
- "AH"" CRED THE IMP IN SHRILL TRIUMH, AND SHE FLUNG HER ARMS ROUND HIS NECK AND KISSED HIM. SHE DID NOT MIND HIS PUTTING IT ON THE SCORE OF CLUTY.



IX

The Man in Possession

IN THESE DAYS JANIE IVER WOULD HAVE BEEN LONELY BUT FOR THE MAJOR'S ATTENTIONS. HER FATHER HAD GONE TO LONDON ON BUSINESS—SHOWING, TO MR NEELD'S RELIEF. NO DISPOSITION TO TAKE THE JOURNAL WITH HIM TO READ ON THE WAY-NEELD WAS ABSURDLY NERVOUS ABOUT THE JOURNAL NOW. HER MOTHER WAS ENGROSSED IN A NOTABLE SCHEME WHICH MISS SWINKERTON HAD STARTED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE POOR OF BLENTMOUTH, BIBLE-READINGS. A SAVINGS-BANK, AND COTTAGE-GARDENS WERE SO INEXTRICABLY MINGLED IN IT THAT THE BENEFICIARY. IF SHE LIKED ONE, HAD TO GO IN FOR THEM ALL. "JUST MY OBJECT." MISS SWINKERTON WOULD REWARK TRIUMPHANTLY AS SHE SET THE FLOWER-POTS DOWN ON THE BIBLES. ONLY TO FIND THAT THE BANK-BOOKS HAD GOT STORED AWAY WITH THE SEED, CLEARLY MRS IVER, CHIEF AIDE-DE-CAMP. HAD NO LESURE. HARRY WAS AT BLENT: NO WORD AND NO SIGN CAME FROM HIM. BOB BROADLEY NEVER MADE ADVANCES. THE FIELD WAS CLEAR FOR THE MAJOR. JANIE. GRATEFUL FOR HIS ATTENTIONS. YET FELT VAGUELY THAT HE WAS MORE AMUSING AS ONE OF TWO ATTENTIVE CAVALIERS THAN WHEN HE WAS HER ONLY RESOURCE, A SENSE OF FLATNESS CAME OVER HER SOMETIMES. IN FACT THE CENTRE OF INTEREST HAD SHIFTED FROM HER: SHE NO LONGER HELD THE STAGE IT WAS OCCUPIED NOW. FOR THE FEW DAYS SHE HAD STILL TO LIVE. BY LADY TRISTRAM. MOREOVER. DUPLAY WAS PUZZLING. ALTHOUGH NOT A GIRL WHO ERECTED EVERY ATTENTION OR EVERY INDICATION OF LIKING INTO AN OBLIGATION TO PROPOSE MATRIMONY. JANIE KNEW THAT AFTER A CERTAIN POINT things of this kind were supposed to go either forward or backward, REMAIN in statu quo. If HER OWN BEARING TOWARD BOB CONTRADICTED THIS GENERAL RULE—WELL, THAT WAS AN EXCEPTIONAL CASE. IN DUPLAY'S INSTANCE SHE COULD SEE NOTHING EXCEPTIONAL. SHE HERSELF WAS

FOR DELAY, SHE THOUGHT HE OUGHT TO BE. IT IS NOT VERY FLATTERING WHEN A GENTLEWAN TAKES TOO LONG OVER CONSIDERING SUCH A MATTER: A TOUCH OF IMPETLIOSITY IS MORE RECOMING. SHE WOULD HAVE PRETERRED THAT HE should need to be put off, and failed to understand why (if it may be so expressed) he put himself off from day to day. BUT DUPLAY'S REASONS WERE, IN FACT, OVERWHELMING, LADY TRISTRAM LIVED. STILL. AND HE HAD THE GRACE TO COUNT THAT AS THE STRONGEST MOTIVE FOR holding his hand. Harry's campaign was for the moment at a standstill: DUPLAY HAD NO DOUBT HE WOULD RESUME IT AS SOON AS HIS MOTHER WAS BURIED: ON ITS APPARENT PROGRESS THE MAJOR'S ACTION WOULD DEPEND. IT WAS JUST POSSIBLE THAT HE COULD DEFEAT HIS ENEWY WITHOUT HIS SECRET WEAPON: IN THAT EVENT HE PICTURED HIMSELF WRITING A LETTER TO HARRY. HALF SORROWFUL, HALF MAGNANIMOUS, IN WHICH HE WOULD LEAVE THAT YOUNG MAN TO SETTLE MATTERS WITH HIS CONSCIENCE, AND, FOR HIS OWN PART, WASH HIS HANDS OF THE WHOLE AFFAIR. BUT HIS CONVICTION WAS THAT THERE WOULD. COME A CRITICAL MOMENT AT WHICH HE COULD GO TO IVER, NOT (AS HE MUST NOW) WITHOUT ANY COMPELLING REASON, BUT IN THE GUISE OF A FRIEND WHO ACTS RELUCTANTLY YET UNDER AN IMPERIOUS CALL. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF HE DID? VICTORY. HE USED TO REPEAT TO HIMSELF. BUT OFTEN HIS HEART SANK. MINA WAS WITH HIM NO MORE: HE NEVER THOUGHT OF NEELD AS A POSSIBLE ALLY: HARRY'S POSITION WAS STRONG. AMONG THE REASONS FOR WHICH DUPLAY DID NOT ACKNOWLEDGE TO HIMSELF WAS THE SIMPLE AND

NOT FAGER FOR A FINAL ISSUE-INDEED THAT WOULD PROBABLY BE BROUGHT ABOUT IN ANOTHER WAY-BUT, KNOWING NOTHING OF HIS DIPLOMATIC REASONS

COMMON ONE THAT HE WAS IN HIS HEART AFRAID TO ACT. HE MEANT TO ACT. BUT HE SHRANK FROM IT AND POSTPONED THE HOUR AS LONG AS HE COLLD. DEFEAT WOULD BE VERY IGNOMINIOUS: AND HE COULD NOT DBNY THAT DEFEAT WAS POSSIBLE MERELY FROM WANT OF MEANS TO CARRY ON THE WAR. WHEN THE MAJOR RECOGNIZED THIS FACT HE WAS FILLED WITH A SOMBRE INDIGNATION

AT THE INEQUALITIES OF WEALTH, AND AT THE WAYS OF A WORLD WHEREIN NOT

EVEN TRUTH SHALL TRIUMPH UNLESS SHE COMMANDS A BIG CREDIT AT THE bank.

AND MINA ANNOYED HIM INTENSELY. ASSUMING AN AGGRIEVED AIR. AND HINTING SEVERE MORAL CONDEMNATION IN EVERY GLANCE OF HER EYE. SHE BEHAVED FOR ALL THE WORLD AS THOUGH THE MAJOR HAD BEGLIN THE WHOLE THING, AND ENTIRELY IGNORED HER OWN RESPONSIBILITY. SHE CONVEYED THE VIEW THAT HE WAS THE UNSCRUPULOUS ASSAILANT. SHE THE DEVOTED DEFENDER, OF THE TRISTRAMS, SUCH A VOITE-FACE AS THIS WAS NOT ONLY PALPABLY UNJUST. IT WAS ALTOGETHER TOO NIMBLE A BIT OF GYMNASTICS FOR DUPLAY TO APPRECIATE. THE GENERAL UNREASONABLENESS OF WOMAN WAS HIS ONLY REFUGE: BUT THE DOGMA COULD NOT BRING UNDERSTANDING, MUCH less consolation, with it. "What DID YOU TELL ME FOR. THEN?" HE ORIED AT LAST. "YOU WERE HOT ON IT THEN. NOW YOU SAY YOU WON'T HELP ME. YOU'LL HAVE NOTHING MORE TO DO with it!" "I only told it you as—as a remarkable circumstance," the Imp alleged, with a wanton disregard for truth. "Nonsense, Mina. You were delighted to have a weapon against voung Tristram then." "I CAN'T HELP IT IF YOU INSIST ON MISUNDERSTANDING ME. UNCLE. AND. anyhow, I suppose I can change my mind if I like, can't I?" "No." HE DECLARED. "IT'S NOT FAIR TO ME. I CAN'T MAKE YOU OUT AT ALL. You're not in love with Harry Tristram, are you?" "With that boy?" asked Mina, attempting to be superb. "THAT'S WOMEN'S OLD NONSENSE," OBSERVED DUPLAY, TWIRLING HIS MUSTACHE KNOWINGLY. "THEY OFTEN FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUNG MEN AND always try to pass it off by calling them boys." "Of course I haven't your experience, uncle," she rejoined, passing. into the sarcastic vein. "AND IF YOU ARE," HE WENT ON, REVERTING TO THE SPECIAL CASE, "I DON'T SEE

"Some people are capable of self-sacrifice in their love."

"Yes, But I SHOULDN'T THINK YOU'D BE ONE OF THEM," SAID THE MAJOR RATHER
RUDBLY. HE LOOKED AT HER OURIOUSLY. HER INTEREST IN HARRY WAS

why you make his path smooth to Janie Iver."

RUDELY. HE LOCKED AT HER CURIOUSLY. HER INTEREST IN HARRY WAS UNMSTAKABLE, HER CHAMPIONSHIP OF HIM HAD BECOME THOROUGH-GOING, FIERCE, AND (TO THE MAJOR'S MIND) UTTERLY UNSCRUPLLOUS. WAS HE FACED

WITH A STILATION SO STARTILINGLY CHANGED? DID HIS NECE OBJECT TO TURNING HARRY OFF HIS THRONE BECAUSE SHE HARBORED A HOPE OF SHARING IT WITH HIM? IF THAT WERE SO, AND IF THE HOPE HAD ANY CHANGE OF BECOMING A REALITY, DUPLAY WOULD HAVE TO RECONSIDER HIS GAME. BUT WHAT CHANGE OF SUCCESS COULD THERE BE? SHE WOULD (HE PUT IT BLUNTLY IN HIS THOUGHTS) only be making a fool of herself.

THE IMP SCREWED UP HER LITTLE LEAN FACE INTO A GRIMACE WHICH SERVED.

EFFECTUALLY TO COVER ANY SIGN OF HER REAL FEELINGS. SHE NETHER ADMITTED NOR DENIED THE CHARGE LEVIED AGAINST HER. SHE WAS BEWILDERING HER UNCLE, AND SHE FOUND, AS USUAL, A GENUINE FLEASURE IN THE FURSUIT. IF SHE WERE ALSO BEWILDERING HERSELF A LITTLE WITH HER CONSTANT THOUGHTS OF HARRY TRISTRAM AND HER ARDENT CHAMPIONSHIP OF HIS CAUSE, WELL, IN THE COUNTRY THERE IS SUCH A THING AS BEING TOO PEAGEFUL. AND UP TO THE

PRESENT TIME THE CONFUSION OF FEELING HAD BEEN RATHER PLEASANT THAN painful.

"I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT I FEEL," SHE REMARKED THE NEXT MOMENT. "BUT YOU CAN READ WOMEN, UNCLE, YOU'VE OFTEN SAID SO, AND I DARE SAY YOU REALLY KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT I FEEL THAN I DO MYSELF." A GROSSNESS OF

INNOCENCE WAS HER NEW ASSUMPTION. "NOW JUDGING FROM WHAT I DO AND LOOK—THAT'S THE WAY TO JUDGE, ISN'T IT, NOT FROM WHAT I SAY?—WHAT DO you think my real inmost feelings are about Mr Tristram?"

IF THE MAJOR HAD BEEN ASKED WHAT HIS REAL INVOST FEELINGS ABOUT HIS

NECE WERE AT THE MOMENT, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN AT SOME DIFFICULTY TO EXPRESS THEM DECOROUSLY. SHE WAS BACK AT FIFTEEN—A PARTICULARLY

WERE FIXED ON HIS IRRITATED FACE. HE WOULD HAVE AGREED ARSOLLITELY WITH Mr Cholderton's estimate of the evil in her, and of its proper remedy. WHEREIN DUPLAY WAS DERIDED HIS NIECE MADE VERY PLAIN TO HIM. WHEREIN HIS WORDS HAD ANY EFFECT WAS STUDIOUSLY CONCEALED. YET SHE REPEATED THE WORDS WHEN HE HAD, WITH A MARKED FAILURE OF TEMPER. GONE HIS WAY AND SLAMMED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. "IN LOVE WITH HARRY TRISTRAM!" MINA FOUND THE IDEA AT ONCE EXPLANATORY AND PICTURESQUE. Why otherwise was she his champon? She paused (as they say) for A REPLY. HOW BETTER COULD SHE DRAW TO HERSELF A PART AND A SHARE IN THE UNDOUBTEDLY ROWANTIC SITUATION IN WHICH SHE GROUPED THE FACTS OF THE CASE? BY BEING IN LOVE WITH HARRY SHE BECAME PART OF THE DRAMA; AND SHE COMPLICATED THE DRAMA MOST DELICHTELLLY. JANIE KNEW NOTHING-

EXASPERATING CHILD OF FIFTEEN. HER GREAT EYES, WITH THEIR MOCK GRAVITY.

Harry would reciprocate her proposed feelings? The Imp hesitated BETWEEN A NATURAL VEXATION AND AN ARTISTIC PLEASURE. SUCH A FAILURE ON HIS PART WOULD WOUND THE WOMAN, BUT IT WOULD ADD PATHOS TO THE PLAY. SHE BECAME ALMOST SURE THAT SHE COULD LOVE HARRY: SHE REMAINED. UNCERTAIN WHETHER HE SHOULD RETURN THE COMPLIMENT, AND, AFTER ALL, TO

SHE KNEW EVERYTHING. JANIE HESITATED—WHAT IE SHE DID NOT HESITATE? A BIG *rôle* OPENED BEFORE HER EYES. WHAT IF IT WERE VERY UNLIKELY THAT

BE LADY TRISTRAM OF BLENT! THAT WAS ATTRACTIVE. OR (IN CASE HARRY SUFFERED DEFEAT) TO BE LADY TRISTRAM OF BLENT IN THE SIGHT OF HEAVEN (A POLITE AND TIME-HONORED WAY OF DESCRIBING AN ARRANGEMENT NOT

RECOGNIZED ON EARTH. AND QUITE ADAPTABLE TO THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES): THAT HAD A HARDLY LESS ALLURING, AND AT LEAST A RARER.

FLAVOR. THE IMP LOOKED DOWN ON BLENT WITH AN ACCESS OF INTEREST. Monsieur Zabriska had leet her with unexhausted reserves of feeling. Moreover she could not be expected to help her unale if she were

SPRIOUSLY ATTACHED TO HARRY. THE MORAL OF ALL THIS FOR THE MAJOR WAS THAT

IT IS UNWISE TO SUGGEST COURSES OF ACTION UNLESS YOU ARE WILLING TO SEE THEM CARRIED OUT, OR CHANNELS OF EVIOTION UNLESS YOU ARE PREPARED TO

find them filled

"Some people are capable of self-sacrifice in their love." That would MEAN BEING HIS CHAMPION STILL. AND LETTING HIM MARRY JANIE IVER. SHE DID NOT OBJECT MUCH TO HER OWN PART, BUT SHE CAVILLED SUDDENLY AT JANIE'S-OR AT HARRY'S RELATION TO JANIE, WOULD IT BE BETTER TO SHARE ADVERSITY WITH HIM? PERHAPS, BUT, AFTER ALL, SHE DID NOT FANCY HIM IN ADVERSITY. THE THIRD COURSE RECOMMENDED ITSELF-VICTORY FOR HIM. BUT not Janie. Who then? AT THIS POINT MINA BECAME SENSIBLE OF NO MORE THAN THE VAGLEST VISIONS, NOT AT ALL CONVINCING EVEN TO HERSELF. BY A SAD DEFICIENCY OF IMAGINATION. SHE COULD GIVE NO DEFINITENESS TO A PICTURE OF HARRY TRISTRAM MAKING LOVE. HE HAD NEVER. TO HER MIND. LOOKED LIKE IT WITH JANIE IVER, EVEN WHILE HE HAD PURPORTED TO BE DOING IT. HE NEVER LOOKED LIKE IT AT ALL. NOT EVEN AS THOUGH HE COULD DO IT. STAY, THOUGH! THAT NEW WAY OF HIS, WHICH SHE HAD MARKED WHEN HE CAME UP THE HILL. TO THANK HER FOR THE FLOWERS. WAS AN EXCEPTION. BUT THE NEW WAY HAD BEEN FOR HIS MOTHER'S SAKE. NOW A MAN CANNOT BE IN LOVE WITH HIS MOTHER. THE QUESTION GREW MORE PLZZLING, MORE ANNOYING, MORE engrossing still. WHILE FULL OF THESE PROBLEMS. REFUSING INDEED TO BE ANYTHING BLSE. MINA WAS SURPRISED BY A VISIT FROM MISS SWINKERTON, WHO SOUGHT A SUBSCRIPTION FOR THE SCHEWE OF WHICH AN INADEQUATE ACCOUNT HAS ALREADY BEEN GIVEN. MISS SWINKERTON (FOR SOME REASON SHE WAS GENERALLY KNOWN AS MISS S., A VULGAR STYLE OF DESCRIPTION POSSESSING SOMETIMES AN INEXPLICABLE APPROPRIATENESS) WAS FIFTY-FIVE. TALL AND BONY, THE DAUGHTER OF A REAR-ADMRAL, THE SISTER OF AN ARCHDEACON. SHE LIVED FOR GOOD WORKS AND BY GOSSIP. MINA'S SOVEREIGN (FOREIGNERS WILL NOT GRASP THE CHEAP ADDITIONAL HANDSOMENESS OF A GUINEA) DULY DISBURSED, CONVERSATION BECAME GENERAL—THAT IS TO SAY, THEY TALKED about their neighbors. "A HARD YOUNG MAN." SAID MISS S. (WHY BE MORE GENTEEL THAN HER

friends?) "And if Janie Iver thinks he's in love with her----"

MISS SWINGERTON HAD ALWAYS BEEN RATHER SURPRISED, NOT TO SAY HURT, WHEN THE CATECHSM ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT SHE MEANT BY the Lord's Prayer. This question of Mina's was still more uncalled for.

"What do you mean by being in love, Miss Swinkerton?"

"You know enough English, my dear——"
"It's NOT A QUESTION OF ENGLISH," INTERRUPTED MINA, "BUT OF HUMAN NATURE,
Miss Swinkerton."

"When I was a girl there were no such questions."
"What about Lady Tristram. then?"

There was flattery in this, ten or rifteen years of flattery. Miss S. was unmoved.

S.'S HOUSE WAS CALLED SEAVIEW—SEA-BACKVIEW WOULD HAVE BEEN A more precise description.

"I call him in love with Janie Iver. He must want to marry her or——"

"They do say that money isn't very plentiful at Blent. And there'll be the

Death Duties, you know."

"I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT LADY TRISTRAM NEVER CALLED AT SEAVIEW." MISS.

"What are they?" asked Mina.
"LIKE STAMPS," EXPLAINED MISS S., VAGUELY. "FOR MY PART, I THINK IT'S

LUCKY HE IS WHAT HE IS. THERE'S BEEN BNOUGH OF FALLING IN LOVE IN THE TRISTRAM FAMILY. IF YOU ASK ME WHO IS IN LOVE WITH HER, OF COURSE IT'S POOR YOUNG BROADLEY. WELL, YOU KNOW THAT, AS YOU'RE ALWAYS DRIVING UP to Mingham with her."

"We've only been three or four times, Miss Swinkerton."

"SIX, I WAS TOLD." OBSERVED MISS S., WITH AN AIR OF PREFERRING ACCURACY.

"Oh. I SHOULD BE VERY PLEASED TO SEE HIM MARRIED TO JANIE—MR TRISTRAM, I MEAN, OF COURSE—BUT SHE MUSTN'T EXPECT TOO MUCH, MY dear. Where's your uncle?" "AT FAIRHOLME. I EXPECT," ANSWERED THE IMP DEMURELY. AS A MATTER OF fact the Major had gone to Exeter on a business errand. "FAIRHOLME?" MISS S.'S AIR WAS SIGNIFICANT, MINA'S FALSEHOOD REWARDED. MINA THREW OUT A SMLE: HER VISITOR'S PURSED LIPS RESPONDED. to it "He goes there a lot." pursued Mina. "to play golf with Mr Iver."

"SO I'VE HEARD." HER TONE PUT THE REPORT IN ITS PROPER PLACE. TO PLAY aolf indeed! "I THINK JANE'S RATHER FOND OF MR TRISTRAM, ANYHOW." THIS WAS SIMPLY A

feeler on Mina's part. "WELL, MY DEAR, THE POSITION! BLENT'S BEEN UNDER A CLOUD—THOUGH. PEOPLE DON'T SEEM TO MIND THAT MUCH NOWADAYS. TO BE SURE, BUT THE NEW LADY TRISTRAM! THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE HEADS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD. SHE'LL HAVE HM. NO DOUBT. BUT AS FOR BEING IN LOVE WITH him-well, could you. Madame Zabriska?"

"YES." SAID THE IMP. WITHOUT THE LEAST HESITATION. "I THINK HE'S MOST attractive—mysterious, you know, I'm quite taken with him."

to Mina herself. "But I know the manner you mean."

"He always looks at me as if I wanted to pick his pocket."

"WELL, YOU GENERALLY DO-FOR YOUR CHARITIES." THE LAUGH WAS CONFINED.

"Poor young Man! I'm told he's very sensitive about his mother. That's

IT PERHAPS." THE GUESS WAS AT ALL EVENTS AS NEAR AS GOSSIP GENERALLY GETS TO TRUTH. "IT WOULD MAKE HIM A VERY UNCOMFORTABLE SORT OF HUSBAND

though, even if one didn't mind having that kind of story in the family."

feet to go was quite characteristic.

"I'M REALLY GLAD, MY DEAR," SHE OBSERVED, HANGING HER SILK BAG ON HER ARM, "TO HAVE HAD THIS TALK WITH YOU. THEY DO SAY SUCH THINGS, AND NOW I shall be able to contradict them on the best authority."

"What do they say?"

"WELL, I NEVER REPEAT THINGS; STILL I THINK PERHARS YOU'VE A RIGHT TO KNOW. THEY DO SAY THAT YOU'RE MORE. INTERESTED IN HARRY TRISTRAM THAN A MERE neighbor would be, and—well, really, I don't quite know how to put it."

"OH, I DO!" CRIED MINA, DELIGHTEDLY HITTING THE MARK. "THAT UNGLE AND I are working together, I suppose?"

"I DON'T LISTEN TO SUCH GOSSIP, BUT IT COMES TO MY EARS." MISS S.

WITH A FLASH OF SUPPRISE—REALLY SHE HAD NOT BEEN THINKING ABOUT HERSELF, IN SPITE OF HER LITTLE ATTEMPTS TO MYSTIFY MISS S.—MINA CAUGHT THAT LADY INDUCING IN A VERY INTENT SCRUTHLY OF HER, WHICH GAVE AN OBVIOUS POINT OF HER LAST WORDS AND PRIVED THE WAY (AS IT APPEARED IN A MOMENT) FOR A DIRECT APPROACH TO THE PRINCIPAL OBJECT OF MISS S.'S VISIT. THAT THIS OBJECT DID NOT COME TO THE PRONIT TILL MISS S. WAS ON HER

"I AMCLEVER! DEAR MISS SWINKERTON, I NEVER THOUGHT OF ANYTHING HALF SO good myself. I'll tell uncle about it directly."

MISS S. LOCKED AT HER SUSPICIOUSLY. THE INNOCENCE SEEMED VERY MUCH

"THEY'D SAY THAT BOB BROADLEY'S NO REAL DANGER, AND IF IT should

over-done.

"I knew you'd laugh at it," she observed.

"WHAT DIPLOMATISTS WE ARE!" SAID THE IMP. "I DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE SO

clever. But why do I take Janie to Mingham?"

disgust Harry Tristram----"

admitted.

herself.

Miss S. Took her leave, quite undecided whether to announce on the
BEST AUTHORITY THAT THE IDEA WAS TRUE. OR THAT IT WAS QUITE UNFOUNDED.

"I SHOULD DO THAT EVEN IF IT WAS TRUE." SAID MINA, THOROUGHLY ENJOYING

ONE THING ONLY WAS CERTAIN; WHATEVER SHE DECIDED TO SAY, SHE WOULD SAY ON THE BEST AUTHORITY. IF IT TURNED OUT INCORRECT IN THE END, MISS S. WOULD TAKE CREDIT FOR AN IMPENETRABLE DISCRETION AND AN UNSWERVING loyalty to the friends who had given her their confidence.

loyalty to the friends who had given her their confidence.

MINA WAS LEFT VERY UNQUIET. MISS S. CHIMED IN WITH THE MAJOR, THE

NEIGHBORH-COD TOO SEEMED IN THE SAME TUNE. SHE COULD LAUGH AT THE INGENUTIES ATTRIBUTED TO HER, YET THE NOTIONS WHICH HAD GIVEN THEM BIRTH FOUND, AS SHE PERCEIVED MORE AND MORE CLEARLY, A WARRANT IN HER FEELINGS, IF NOT IN HER CONDUCT. LOOK AT IT HOW SHE WOULD, SHE WAS WRAPPED UP IN HARRY TRIS. TRAM, SHE SPENT HER DAYS WATCHING HIS FORTUNES, ANY WAKEPUL HOUR OF THE NIGHT FOUND HER COUPIED IN THINKING OF HIM. WAS SHE A TRAITOR TO HER FRIEND JANIE IVER? WAS THAT TREACHERY BIRNOSING HER BACK, BY A ROUNDABOUT WAY, TO A NEW ALLIANCE WITH HER UNCLE? DID IT INVOLVE TREASON TO HARRY HIMSELP? FOR CERTAINLY IT WAS hard to go on helping him toward a marriage with Janie Iver.

"BUT I WILL ALL THE SAME IF HE WANTS IT," SHE EXCLAIMED, AS SHE PACED ABOUT ON THE TERRACE, GLANOING NOW AND THEN DOWN AT BLENT. AND AGAIN SHE STOOD AGHAST AT THE THOROUGH-GOING DEVOTION WHICH SUCH AN ATTITUDE AS THAT IMPLIED. "IF ONLY I COULD KEEP OUT OF THINGS!" SHE MURTIMITURE. "BUT I NEVER CAN."

MAJOR DUPLAY DROVE UP THE HILL IN A BLENTIMOUTH STATION FLY; HE HAD MET THE DOCTOR ON THE ROAD, AND THE NEWS WAS THAT IN ALL PROBABILITY LADY TRISTRAM WOULD NOT LIVE OUT THE NIGHT. THE TIDINGS GAINED ADDED SOLENITY FROM DUPLAY'S DELIVERY OF THEM BYEN THOUGH A LARGER SHARE

SOLEWNITY FROM DUPLAY'S DELIVERY OF THEM, EVEN THOUGH A LARGER SHARE
OF HIS IMPRESSIVENESS WAS DIRECTED TO THE INFLUENCE THE EVENT MIGHT
have on his fortunes than to the event itself.

OF MINE. AND THEN HELL GO TO FAIRHOLME. THAT IS." HE TURNED SUDDENLY, ALMOST THREATENINGLY, UPON HER. "I HOPE YOU'VE COME TO YOUR SENSES. MINA." SAID HE "YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEAK YOU KNOW IE I CAN'T MAKE YOU. IVER WILL." HE PAUSED AND LAUGHED. "BUT YOU'LL SPEAK FAST ENOUGH WHEN vou find vourself in the lawver's office."

"THEN WE SHALL SEE, HE'LL ASSUME THE TITLE, I SUPPOSE. THAT'S NO AFFAIR

Mina refused to be frightened by the threatened terrors of the law. "Who's going to take me to a lawyer's office?" she demanded.

"Why. Iver will, of course." He showed con temptuous surprise. "Oh, vou've gone too far to think you can get out of it now." SHE STUDIED HIM ATTENTIVELY FOR A MOMENT OR TWO. THE RESULT WAS reassuring; his blustering manner hid, she believed, a sinking heart.

"YOU CAN'T FRIGHTEN ME, UNCLE. I'VE MADE UP MY MIND WHAT TO DO, AND I shall do it." SHE WAS NOT AFRAID OF HIM NOW. SHE WAS WONDERING HOW SHE HAD

COME TO BE BULLIED INTO TELLING HER SECRET AT ALL. LOOKING BACK WITH SURPRISE TO THAT SCENE IN THE LIBRARY WHEN, WITH SULLEN OBEDIENCE AND CHILDISH FEAR, SHE HAD OBEYED HIS COMMAND TO SPEAK. WHY WAS IT ALL DIFFERENT NOW? WHY WAS HIS ATTEMPT TO TAKE THE SAME LINE WITH HER NOT

NO LONGER HIS. LIKE SOME TURBULENT LITTLE CITY OF OLD GREECE. SHE HAD MADE HER REVOLUTION: THE END HAD BEEN TO SADDLE HER WITH A NEW

ONLY A FAILURE, BUT A RIDICULOUS EFFORT? SHE KNEW THE ANGRY ANSWER HE WOULD GIVE. COULD SHE GIVE ANY OTHER ANSWER HERSELF? A NEW INFLUENCE HAD COME INTO HER LIFE. SHE HAD NOT CEASED TO BE AFRAID. BUT SHE WAS AFRAID OF SOMEBODY ELSE. A DOMINATION WAS OVER HER STILL. BUT IT WAS

TYRANT. THERE SEEVED NO MORE USE IN DENYING IT; THE MAJOR SAID IT,

MISS S. SAID IT, THE NEIGHBORHOOD WAS ALL AGREED. WHAT SHE HERSELF WAS MOST CONSCIOUS OF, AND MOST OPPRESSED BY, WAS A SENSE OF

AUDACTY. HOW DARED SHE DEVOTE HERSELF TO HARRY TRISTRAM? HE HAD

when she spoke of him as "That Boy." DUPLAY TURNED AWAY FROM HER. DISHEARTENED AND DISGUSTED. THINGS LOOKED WELL FOR THE ENEMY. HE WAS ALONE WITH HIS LING PEORTED STORY OF A CONVERSATION WHICH MINA WOULD NOT REPEAT, WITH HIS EMPTY PURSE.

ASKED NOTHING OF HER. NO. BUT HE HAD IMPOSED SOMETHING ON HER. SHE HAD VOLUNTEERED FOR HIS SERVICE. IT WAS INDEED "WOMEN'S NONSENSE"

WHICH COULD SUPPLY NO MEANS OF PROVING WHAT HE SAID. HE RAN THE RISK OF LOSING WHAT CHANCE HE HAD. OF JANIE IVER'S FAVOR, AND HE WAS IN SORE

PERIL OF COMING OFF SECOND-BEST AGAIN IN HIS WRESTLING-BOUT WITH HARRY TRISTRAM. THE MAN IN POSSESSION WAS STRONG. THE PERILS THAT HAD SEEMED SO THREATENING WERE PASSING AWAY. MINA WAS DEVOTED:

NEED WOULD BE SLENT. WHO WOULD THERE BE WHO COULD EFFECTIVELY CONTEST HIS CLAIM, OR OUST HIM FROM HIS PLACE? THUS SECURE, HE WOULD

HARDLY NEED THE CHECK ALWAYS BY HIM. YET HE WAS A CALITIOUS WARY YOUNG MAN. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT HE WOULD STILL LIKE TO HAVE THE check by him, and that he would take the only means of getting it.

Now that the moment had come for which all his life had been a preparation, Harry Tristram had little reason to be afraid.



X

Behold the Heir!

ADDIE TRISTRAM DIED WITH ALL HER OLD LINCOMMONNESS. DEATH WAS TO HER

AN END MORE FULLY THAN IT IS TO MOST: HAD SHE BEEN HERSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR IT, SHE COULD HARDLY HAVE THOUGHT LESS OF ANY POSSIBLE CONSECUENCES AND IT WAS TO HER SUCH A REGINNING AS IT CAN SELDOM SEEM. SHE HAD BEEN LIVING IN ANTICIPATION OF DYING, BUT IN A SENSE LITTERLY REMOTE FROM THAT CONTEMPLATION OF THEIR LATTER END WHICH IS ENJOINED ON THE PIOUS. SO THAT, TOGETHER WITH AN ACQUIESCENCE SO COMPLETE AS ALMOST TO JUSTIFY HER SON IN CALLING IT JOYFUL. THERE WAS AN EXPECTATION, NEARLY AN EXCITEMENT—SAVE THAT THE TIRED BODY FAILED TO SECOND THE MIND. SHE MIGHT HAVE SHOWN REMORSE, BOTH FOR HER OWN ACTS AND FOR THE POSITION IN WHICH SHE WAS LEAVING HARRY: SHE FELL IN WITH THE VIEW HE HAD ALWAYS MAINTAINED WITH HER. THAT ALL THESE THINGS HAD COME ABOUT SOMEHOW. HAD PRODUCED A CERTAIN STATE OF AFFAIRS. AND MUST BE MADE TO SEEM AS IF THEY HAD DONE NOTHING OF THE SORT. DURING THE LAST DAY OR TWO SHE WAS DELIRIOUS AT INTERVALS: AS A precaution Harry was with her then, instead of the nurse. The measure WAS SUPERFLUOUS; THERE WAS NOTHING ON LADY TRISTRAM'S MIND. AND WHEN SHE SPOKE UNCONSCIOUSLY. SHE SPOKE OF TRIFLES. THE FEW FINAL HOURS FOUND HER CONSCIOUS AND INTELLIGENT, ALTHOUGH VERY WEAK, JUST AT THE BND A CURIOUS IDEA GOT HOUD OF HER. SHE WAS A LITTLE DISTRESSED THAT THE GAINSBOROUGHS WERE NOT THERE: SHE WHISPERED HER FEELING TO HARRY APOLOGETICALLY, WELL REVENDERING HIS OBJECTION TO THAT BRANCH OF THE FAMILY, AND HIS DISINGLINATION TO HAVE THEM OR ANY OF THEM AT BLENT. "CEQLY OUGHT TO BE HERE." SHE MURMURED. HARRY STARTED A LITTLE: HE WAS NOT ACCUSTOMED IN HIS OWN MIND TO CONCEDE CECILY ANY RIGHTS. HIS

MOTHER'S FEAR OF OFFENDING HIM BY THE SUGGESTION WAS VERY OBVIOUS. "SHE'D COME AFTER YOU, YOU SEE, IF ----" SHE SAID ONCE OR TWICE, THERE DID NOT PASS BETWEEN THEM A WORD OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT CECLY OUGHT TO COME BEFORE HIM. YET HE WAS LEFT WONDERING WHETHER THAT IDEA. SO SCORNED BEFORE, HAD NOT WON ITS WAY TO HER WITH SOME SUDDEN STRENGTH—AS THOUGH AN INSTINCT FOR THE TRUE HER MADE ITSELF FEET. IN SPITE OF ALL HER RESOLUTION AND ALL HER PREJUDICES. AND FORCED HER TO DO SOMETHING TOWARD RECOGNIZING THE CLAIMS WHICH THEY WERE BOTH determined to thwart THE BAREST HINT OF THIS KIND WOULD HAVE RAISED HARRY'S SUSPICION AND ANGER A FEW WEEKS BEFORE: THE NEW MOOD WHICH MINA ZABRISKA HAD MARKED IN HIM MADE HIM TAKE IT QUIETLY NOW, AND EVEN AFFECTIONATELY. For this Addie Tristram was grateful: she had always the rare grace of SEEMING SURPRISED AT HER OWN POWER OVER MEN. IT WAS NO LESS IN KEEPING WITH HER CHARACTER AND HER LIFE THAT THE FEELING SHE SUFFERED UNDER, AND MANIFESTED, WAS VERY EASILY APPEASED. HARRY PROMISED TO ASK THE GAINSBOROUGHS TO HER FUNERAL. ADDIE TRISTRAM'S CONSCIENTIOUS SCRUPLES WERE ENTIRELY LAID TO REST; WITH A SIGH OF PEACE SHE SETTLED HERSELF TO DIE. IT WAS THE FEUDAL FEELING. HARRY DECIDED, WHICH INSISTED THAT THE FAMILY MUST NOT BE IGNORED: IT DID NOT DBNY THEIR HUMBLE POSITION, OR THE GULF THAT SEPARATED THEM FROM THE SUCCESSION, YET HE was vaguely vexed, even while he agreed to what she wanted. SO SHE PASSED AWAY IN THE FULL TIDE OF THE DARKNESS OF NIGHT. THE DOCTOR HAD LEFT HER SOME HOURS BEFORE. THE NURSE HAD BEEN SENT TO BED, FOR THERE WAS NOTHING THAT COULD BE DONE, HARRY WAS ALONE WITH HER; HE KISSED HER WHEN SHE WAS DEAD, AND STOOD MANY MINUTES BY HER. LOOKING FROM HER TO THE PICTURE OF HER THAT HUNG ON THE WALL. A STRANGE LONELINESS WAS ON HIM. A LONELINESS WHICH THERE SEEMED NOBODY TO SOLACE. HE HAD SAID THAT BLENT WOULD NOT BE MUCH WITHOUT HIS MOTHER. THAT WAS NOT QUITE RIGHT: IT WAS MUCH, BUT DIFFERENT, SHE HAD CARRIED AWAY WITH HER THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE PLACE. THE ESSENCE OF THE LIFE THAT HE HAD LIVED THERE WITH HER. WHO WOULD MAKE THAT THE

TO ASK JANIE IVER FOR HER ANSWER. SAY A WEEK NOW, FOR THE FUNERAL WOULD ENFORCE OR EXCUSE SO MUCH POSTPONEMENT. JANIE IVER WOULD NOT GIVE HIM BACK THE LIFE OR THE ATMOSPHERE. A DESCRIPTION OF HOW HE FELT. HAD IT BEEN RELATED TO HIM A YEAR AGO, WOULD HAVE APPEARED AN ARSURDITY. YET THESE CROWDING UNEXPECTED THOUGHTS MADE NOT A HAIR'S BREADTH OF DIFFERENCE IN WHAT HE PURPOSED. IT WAS ONLY THAT HE BECAME AWARE OF AN IRREPARABLE CHANGE OF SCENE: THERE WAS TO BE NO CHANGE IN HIS ACTION. HE WAS TRISTRAM OF BLENT NOW—THAT HE MUST AND WOULD REMAIN. BUT IT WAS NOT THE SAME BLENT, AND DID NOT SEEM AS THOUGH IT. COULD BE AGAIN. SO MUCH OF THE POETRY HAD GONE OUT OF IT WITH ADDIE Tristram. AFTER HE HAD LEFT HER ROOM. HE WALKED THROUGH THE HOUSE, CARRYING A SHADED CANDLE IN HIS HAND ALONG THE DARK CORRIDORS OF SHINING OAK. HE BENT HIS STEPS TOWARD THE LONG GALLERY WHICH FILLED ALL THE LIPPER FLOOR OF THE LEFT WING. HERE WERE THE VALHALLA AND THE TREASURE-HOUSE OF THE Tristrams, the pictures of ancestors, the cases of precious things

SAME TO HIM AGAIN? SUDDENLY HE RECOLLECTED THAT IN FOUR DAYS HE WAS

SWISHED IN THE TREES AND THE BLENT WASHED ALONG LESURELY. A BEAUTIFUL stillness was about him. It was as though she were by his side, her fair HEAD RESTING AGAINST THE OLD BROCADE COVER OF THE ARM-CHAIR, HER EYES WANDERING IN DELICHTED EMPLOYMENT ROUND THE ROOM SHE HAD LOVED SO WELL. WHO SHOULD SIT THERE NEXT? AS HE LOOKED NOW AT THE ROOM, NOW OUT INTO THE NIGHT, HIS EYES FILLED SUDDENLY WITH TEARS; THE LOVE OF THE

WHICH THE ANCESTORS HAD AMASSED. AT THE BND OF THIS GALLERY ADDIE TRISTRAM HAD USED TO SIT WHEN SHE WAS WELL, IN A LARGE HIGH-BACKED ARM-CHAIR BY THE BIG WINDOW THAT COMMANDED THE GARDENS AND THE RIVER. HE FLUNG THE WIN DOW OPEN AND STOOD LOOKING OUT. THE WIND

PLACE CAME BACK TO HIM, HIS PRIDE IN IT LIVED AGAIN, HE WOULD KEEP IT
NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT WAS HIS BUT BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN HERS BEFORE HIM.
HIS BLOOD SPOKE STRONG IN HIM. SUDDENLY HE SMILED. IT WAS AT THE
thought that all this belonged in law to Miss Cecily Gainsborough—the

HOUSE, THE GALLERY, THE PICTURES, THE TREASURES, THE VERY CHAIR WHERE ADDIE TRISTRAM HAD USED TO SIT. EVERY STICK AND STONE ABOUT THE PLACE to shore. He had nothing at all—according to law.

WELL, THE LAW MUST HAVE SOME HONOR, SOME RECOGNITION, AT ALL EVENTS.

THE GAINSBOROUGHS SHOULD, AS HE HAD PROMISED, BE ASKED TO THE

FUNERAL. THEY SHOULD BE INVITED WITH ALL HONOR AND MOST FORWALLY, IN THE

WAS CECILY GAINSBOROUGH'S, AYE, AND THE BED OF THE BLENT FROM SHORE

NAME OF TRISTRAM OF BLENT—WHOH, BY THE BY WAS, ACCORDING TO LAW, ALSO MISS CEOLY GAINSBOROUGHS. HARRY HAD NO NAME ACCORDING TO LAW, NO MORE THAN HE HAD HOUSES OR PICTURES OR TREASURES, ANY STICK OR STONE, OR THE SMALLEST HERITAGE IN THE BED OF THE BLENT. HE HAD BEEN SON TO THE MISTRESS OF IT ALL; SHE WAS GONE AND HE WAS NOBODY—ACCORDING TO LAW. IT WAS, AFTER ALL, A REASONABLE CONCESSION THAT HIS MOTHER HAD URGED ON HIM, THE GAINSBOROUGHS OUGHT TO BE ASKED TO

MOTHER HAD URGED ON HIM, THE GAINSBOROUGHS OUGHT TO BE ASKED TO THE FUNERAL. THE LAST OF HIS VEXATION ON THIS SCORE DIED AWAY INTO A SENSE OF GRIM AMUSEMENT AT ADDIE TRISTRAM'S WISH AND HIS OWN AFFRECATION OF IT. HE HAD NO SENSE OF DANGER, TRISTRAM HAD SUCCEEDED TO SLEEP, HE WENT DOWN INTO THE GARDEN PRESENTLY, LIT HIS OGAR, AND STROLLED ON TO THE BRIDGE. THE NIGHT HAD GROWN CLEARER AND SOME STARS SHOWED IN THE SKY; IT WAS NEARLY ONE O'CLOCK. HE HAD STOOD WHERE HE WAS ONLY A FEW MOMENTS WHEN TO HIS SURFRISE HE HEARD THE SOUND OF A HORSE'S HOOPS ON THE ROAD FROM BLENTMOUTH. THINKING THE DOCTOR, WHO OFTEN DID HIS ROUNDS IN THE SADDLE, MIGHT HAVE RETURNED, HE CROSSED THE BRIDGE, OPENED THE GATE, AND STOOD ON THE HIGH ROAD. THE RIDER CAME UP IN A FEW MINUTES AND DREW REIN AT THE SIGHT OF HIS FIGURE, BUT, AS HARRY DID NOT MOVE, MADE AS THOUGH HE WOULD RIDE ON AGAIN WITH NO MORE THAN THE CUSTOMARY COUNTRY SALUTE OF

Man Dala Dana dila di la cara di a

"Me—Bob Broadley," was the answer.

"Who is it?" asked Harry, peering through the darkness.

"You're late."

"Good-night."

"I'VE BEEN AT THE CLUB AT BLENTMOUTH. THE CRICKET CLUB'S ANNUAL Dinner, you know."

"Ah. I forgot."

BOB, COME TO A STANDSTILL, WAS TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY OF LIGHTING HIS PIPE. THIS DONE. HE LOOKED UP AT THE HOUSE AND BACK TO HARRY RATHER timidly.

"Lady Tristram——?" he began. "My mother has been dead something above an hour," said Harry.

AFTER A MOMENT BOB DISMOUNTED AND THREW HIS REINS OVER THE gatepost.

"I'M SORRY. TRISTRAM." HE SAID. HOLDING OUT HIS HAND. "LADY TRISTRAM." WAS ALWAYS VERY KIND TO ME. INDEED SHE WAS THAT TO EVERYBODY." HE PAUSED A MOMENT AND THEN WENT ON SLOWLY. "IT MUST SEEM STRANGE TO

YOU WHY I REMEMBER WHEN MY FATHER DIED LET T-BESIDES THE SORROW.

YOU KNOW—SORT OF LOST AT COMING INTO MY BIT OF LAND AT MINGHAM BUT. VOU----" HARRY COULD SEE HIS HEAD TURN AS HE LOOKED OVER THE DEMESNE OF BLENT AND STRUGGLED TO GIVE SOME EXPRESSION TO THE

THOUGHTS WHICH HIS COMPANION'S POSITION SUGGESTED. THE CIRCLINSTANCES OF THIS MEETING MADE FOR SINCERITY AND OPENNESS: THEY WERE ALWAYS BOR'S CHARACTERISTICS. HARRY TOO WAS IN SUCH A MOOD THAT.

he liked Bob to stay and talk a little. THEY FELL INTO TALK WITH MORE EASE AND NATURALNESS THAN THEY HAD RECENTLY ACHIEVED TOGETHER, GETTING BACK TO THE FRIENDLINESS OF BOYHOOD. ALTHOUGH BOB STILL SPOKE AS TO ONE GREATER THAN HIMSELF AND INFUSED A LITTLE DEFERENCE INTO HIS MANNER. BUT THEY CAME TO NOTHING INTIMATE TILL BOB HAD DECLARED THAT HE MUST BE ON HIS WAY AND WAS about to mount his horse.

"As soon as I begin to have people here, I hope you'll come often,"

SAID HARRY, CORDALLY. "NATURALLY WE SHALL BE A LITTLE MORE LIVELY THAN we've been able to be of late, and I shall hope to see all my friends."

HE DID NOT INSTANTLY UNDERSTAND THE HESITATION IN BOB'S MANNER AS HE answered, "You're very kind. I—I shall like to come."

hope I know how to take a licking, Tristram." He held out his hand.
"A LICKING?" BOTH THE WORD AND THE GESTURE SEEMED TO SURPRISE HARRY
Tristram.

BOB TURNED BACK TO HIM. LEAVING HIS HORSE AGAIN. "YES. I'LL COME. I

"OH, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. YOU'RE ENGAGED TO HER, AREN'T YOU? OR AS good as anyhow? I don't want to ask questions——"

"Not even as good as, yet," answered Harry slowly.

"OF COURSE YOU KNOW WHAT I FEEL. EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT, THOUGH I'VE never talked about it—even to her."

"WHY NOT TO HER? ISN'T THAT RATHER USUAL IN SUCH CASES?" HARRY WAS smilling now.

"It would only worry her. What chance should I have?"
"Well, I don't agree with being too humble."

"OH, I DON'T KNOW THAT I'M HUMBLE. PERHAPS I THINK MYSELF AS GOOD A
MAN AS YOU. BUT"—HE LAUCHED A LITTLE—"I'M BROADLEY OF MINGHAM, NOT
Trickrom of Plont"

Tristram of Blent."
"I see. That's it? And our friend the Major?"

"I shouldn't so much mind having a turn-up with the Major."

"But Tristram of Blent is—is too much?"

"Blent must do its duty." Harry pursued.

"You're very fond of her?" Harry asked, frowning a little.

"I'VE BEEN IN LOVE WITH HER ALL MY LIFE—EVER SINCE THEY CAME TO Seaview. Fairholme wasn't dreamed of then."

HE SPOKE OF FAIRHOLME WITH A TOUCH OF BITTERNESS WHICH HE HASTENED to correct by adding—"Of course I'm glad of their good luck."

"It's not your fault, you can't help it." Smled Bob. "You're born to it

and——" He ended with a shruq.

"You mean, if it were Seaview still and not Fairholme——?"
"No, I DON'T. I'VE NO BUSINESS TO THINK ANYTHING OF THE SORT, AND I DON'T.

THINK IT." BOB INTERPOSED QUICKLY. "YOU ASKED ME A QUESTION AND I

ANSWERED IT. I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOU, AND I'M not going to say anything."

"A GOOD MANY REASONS ENTER INTO A MARRIAGE SOMETIMES," REMARKED Harry.

"Yes, with people like you. I know that." His renewed reference to Harry's position brought another fromn to

Harry's face, but it was the frown of thoughtfulness, not of anger.

"I CAN'T QUARREL WITH THE WAY OF THE WORLD, AND I'M SURE IF IT DOES COME
off you'll be good to her."

"You think I don't care about her—about her herself?"

"I don't know, I tell you. I don't want to know. I suppose you like her."
"Yes, I LIKE HER." HE TOOK THE WORD FROM BOB AND MADE NO ATTEMPT TO

"Yes, I LIKE HER." HE TOOK THE WORD FROM BOB AND MADE NO ATTEMPT TO alter or to amplify it.

BOB WAS MOUNTING NOW; THE HOUR WAS LATE FOR HIM TO BE ABROAD AND work waited him in the morning.

"Good-night. Tristram," he said, as he settled in his saddle. "GOOD-NIGHT. AND, BOB, IF BY ANY CHANCE IT DOESN'T COME OFF WITH ME. you have that turn-up with the Major!"

"WELL I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF A FOREIGN CHAP COMING DOWN AND

BUT, MIND YOU, DUPLAY'S A VERY SUPERIOR FELLOW. HE KNOWS THE DELICE OF a lot "

FELLOW." HE CALLED AFTER BOB IN A VERY FRIENDLY VOICE AS HORSE AND RIDER disappeared up the road.

"THINKS HE DOES, ANYHOW," SAID HARRY, SMILING AGAIN, "GOOD-NIGHT, OLD.

"I MUST GO TO BED. I SUPPOSE." HE MUTTERED AS HE RETURNED TO THE BRIDGE AND STOOD LEANING ON THE PARAPET. HE YAWNED, NOT IN

WEARINESS BUT IN A REACTION FROM THE EXCITEMENT OF THE LAST FEW DAYS. HIS EMOTIONAL MOOD HAD PASSED FOR THE TIME AT ALL EVENTS: IT WAS SUCCEEDED BY AN APATHY THAT WAS DULL WITHOUT BEING RESTELL. AND IN ITS GENERAL EFFECT HIS INTERVIEW WITH BOB WAS VAGUELY VEXATIOUS IN SPITE OF

ITS CORDIAL CHARACTER. IT LEFT WITH HIM A NOTION WHICH HE REJECTED BUT COULD NOT QUITE GET RID OF-THE NOTION THAT HE WAS TAKING, OR (IF ALL WERE

BEEN SO IN THE FULLEST POSSIBLE SENSE, WOULD HE HAVE HAD THE NOTION

KNOWN) WOULD BE THOUGHT TO BE TAKING. AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE. BOB HAD SAID HE WAS BORN TO IT AND THAT HE COULD NOT HELP IT. IF THAT HAD INDEED THAT IRRITATED HIM NOW? YES, HE TOLD HIMSELF: BUT THE ANSWER DID NOT OUTE CONVINCE. STILL THE ANNOYANCE WAS NO MORE THAN A RESTLESS. SUGGESTION OF SOMETHING NOT QUITE SATISFACTORY IN HIS POSITION, AND WORTH MENTIONING ONLY AS THE FIRST SUCH FEELING HE HAD EVER HAD. IT DID NOT TROUBLE HIM SERIOUSLY. HE SMOKED ANOTHER CIGAR ON THE BRIDGE AND THEN WENT INTO THE HOUSE AND TO BED. AS HE UNDRESSED IT COCURRED TO HIM (AND THE IDEA GAVE HIM BOTH PLEASURE AND AMUSEMENT) THAT HE HAD MADE A SORT OF ALLIANCE WITH BOB AGAINST DUPLAY, ALTHOUGH IT COULD COME INTO OPERATION ONLY UNDER CIRCLIMSTANCES WHICH WERE VERY unlikely to happen.

AS IT WAS, SHE WANTED TO TALK AND TO HEAR, AND THE GATHERING AFFORDED A CHANCE. MRS IVER WAS THERE, AND MRS TRUMBLER THE VICAR'S WIFE, A MEEK WOMAN, RATHER OUSTED FROM HER PROPER POSITION BY THE BNERGY OF MISS SWINKERTON; SHE WAS TO MANAGE THE BIBLE-READING DEPARTMENT, WHICH WAS NOT NEARLY SO RESPONSIBLE A TASK AS CONDUCTING THE SAVINGS-BANK, AND DID NOT INVOLVE ANYTHING LIKE THE SAME AMOUNT OF SUPERVISION OF OTHER PEOPLE'S AFFAIRS. MRS TRUMBLER FELT, HOWEVER, THAT ON MATTERS of morals she had a claim to speak jure mariti.

"It is SO SAIL!" SHE NURWURED. "AND MR TRUMBLER FOUND HE COULD DO SO

little! He came home quite distressed."

"I'M TOLD SHE WASN'T THE LEAST SENSIBLE OF HER POSITION," OBSERVED MISS
S., with what looked rather like satisfaction.

THE BLINDS DRAWN AT BLENT NEXT MORNING TOLD MINA WHAT HAD HAPPENED, AND THE HOUR OF BLEVEN FOUND HER AT A COMMITTEE MEETING AT MISS SWINKERTON'S, WHICH SHE CERTAINLY WOULD NOT HAVE ATTENDED OTHERWISE.

"DIDN'T SHE KNOW SHE WAS DYING?" ASKED MINA, WHO HAD ESTABLISHED her footing by a hypocritical show of interest in the cottage-gardens.

"OH, YES, SHE KNEW SHE WAS DYING, MY DEAR" SAID MISS S. WHAT POOR

LADY TRISTRAM MIGHT HAVE KNOWN, BUT AFFARENTLY HAD NOT, WAS LEFT TO an obvious inference.

"SHE WAS VERY KND," REWARKED MRS IVER. "NOT EXACTLY ACTIVELY, YOU KNOW, BUT IF YOU HAPPENED TO COME ARROSS HER." SHE ROSE AS SHE

SPOKE AND BADE MISS S. FAREWELL. THAT LADY DID NOT TRY TO DETAIN HER, and the moment the door had closed behind her remarked:

"OF COURSE MRS IVER FEELS IN A DELICATE POSITION AND CAN'T SAY ANYTHING AROUT I ADD THE REPORT TRY TRY TRY TRY TO THE

OF COURSE WERE VERY FEELS IN A DELICATE POSITION AND COURT SAY ANY TIMES
ABOUT LADY TRISTRAM, BUT FROM WHAT I HEAR SHE NEVER REALIZED THE
FECULIARITY OF HER POSITION. NO (THIS TO MIRS TRUMBLER), I MEAN IN THE
NEGHEORHOOD. MIRS TRUMBLER AND THE YOUNG MAN IS JUST THE SAME. BUT

I SHOULD HAVE LIKED TO HEAR THAT MR TRUMBLER THOUGHT IT CAME HOME TO

Mr Trumbler's wife shook her head gently.

"Well, NOW WE SHALL SEE, I SUPPOSE," Miss S. PURSUED. "THE engagement is to be made public directly after the funeral."

Mina almost started at this authoritative announcement.

"AND I SUPPOSE THEY'LL BE MARRIED AS SOON AS THEY DECENTLY CAN. I'M GLAD FOR JANE IVER'S SAKE—NOT THAT I LIKE HIM, THE LITTLE I'VE SEEN OF him."

her at the last."

"Not at church, anyhow," added Miss S. Indisvely. "Perhaps He'll remember what's due to his position now."

"Are you sure they're engaged?" asked Mina.

"We never see him." said Mrs Trumbler.

Miss S. looked at her with a smile. "Certain, my dear."

"How?" asked Mina. Mrs Trumbler stared at her in surprised rebuke.
"When I Make A MSTAKE, IT WILL BE TIME TO ASK QUESTIONS," OBSERVED
MISS S. WITH DIGNITY. "FOR THE PRESENT YOU MAY TAKE WHAT I SAY. I CAN

wait to be proved right, Madame Zabriska."
"I'VE NO DOUBT YOU'RE RIGHT, ONLY I THOUGHT JANE WOULD HAVE TOLD ME,"
said Mina; she had no wish to quarrel with Miss S.

"JANE IVER'S VERY SECRETIVE, MY DEAR. SHE ALWAYS WAS. I USED TO TALK TO
Mrs Iver about it when she was a little girl. And in your case——" Miss
S.'s SMLE COULD ONLY REFER TO THE CIRCUMSTANCE THAT MINA WAS MAJOR

DUPLAY'S NECE, THE MAJOR'S MANCEUNRES HAD NOT ESCAPED MISS S.'S
EYE "OF COURSE THE FUNERAL WILL BE VERY QUET," MISS S. CONTINUED.
"THAT AVOIDS SO MANY DIFFIGULTIES. THE PEOPLE WHO WOULD COME AND

the people who wouldn't—and all that, you know."

Trumbler.
"I hate funerals," said Mina. "I'm going to be cremated."
"That MAY BE VERY WELL ABROAD, MY DEAR." SAID MISS S. TOLERANILY. "BUT

"THERE ARE ALWAYS SO MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT FUNERALS." SIGHED MRS.

YOU COULDN'T HERE. THE QUESTION IS, WILL JANIE IVER GO—AND IF SHE DOES, Where will she walk?"

"OH. I SHOULD HARDLY THINK SHE'D GO. IF IT'S NOT ANNOUNCED. YOU KNOW."

"It's sometimes done, and I'm told she would walk just behind the family."

said Mrs Trumbler

feature of the world!

MINA LEFT THE TWO LADIES DEBATING THIS POINT OF ETIQUETTE, MISS S.
SHOWING SOME DEFERENCE TO MISS TRUMBLER'S EXPERIENCE IN THIS

PARTICULAR DEPARTMENT, BUT PROFESSING TO BE FORTIFIED IN HER OWN VIEW BY THE OPINION OF AN UNDERTAKER WITH A WIDE CONNECTION. SHE REFLECTED, AS she got into her pony carriage, that it is impossible even to die without AFFORDING A GOOD DEAL. OF PLEASURE TO OTHER PEOR E.—SURBLY A FORTUNATE.

ON HER WAY HOME SHE STOPPED TO LEAVE CARDS AT BLENT, AND WAS NOT SUPPRISED WHEN HARRY TRISTRAM CAME OUT OF HIS STUDY, HAVING SEEN HER through the window, and greeted her.

"SEND YOUR TRAP HOME AND WALK UP THE HILL WITH ME," HE SUGGESTED, AND SHE TELL IN WITH HIS WISH VERY BEADLY. THEY CROSSED THE FOOT-PRIDGE.

together.
"I'VE JUST BEEN WRITING TO ASK MY RELATIONS TO THE FUNERAL," HE SAID. "AT MY MOTHER'S WISH, NOT MINE. ONLY TWO OF THEIV—AND I NEVER SAW THEM IN MY life."

"I shouldn't think you'd cultivate your relations much."

heir."

Mina turned to him with a gesture of interest or surprise.

"Your heir?" she said "You mean——?"

"No. But Ceally Gainsborough ought to cove. I suppose. She's My

"I MEAN THAT IF I DIED WITHOUT HAVING ANY CHLDREN, SHE'D SUCCEED ME. SHE'D BE LADY TRISTRAM IN HER OWN RIGHT. AS MY MOTHER WAS." HE

SHE'D BE LADY TRISTRAM IN HER OWN RIGHT, AS MY MOTHER WAS." HE FACED ROUND AND LOCKED AT BLENT. "SHE'S NEVER BEEN TO THE PLACE OR seen it yet," he added.

"How intensely interested she'll be!"

"I DON'T SEE WHY SHE SHOULD," SAID HARRY RATHER CROSSLY. "It'S A GREAT BORE HAVING HER HERE AT ALL, AND IF I'M BARELY CIVIL TO HER THAT'S ALL I SHALL MANAGE. THEY WON'T STAY MORE THAN A FEW DAYS, I SUPPOSE" AFTER A SECOND HE WENT ON: "HER MOTHER WOULDN'T KNOW MY MOTHER, THOUGH after her death the father wanted to be reconciled."

"Is that why you dislike them so?"

"How do you know I dislike them?" he asked, seeming surprised.

"It's PRETTY EVIDENT. ISN'T IT? AND IT WOULD BE A COOD REASON FOR DISLIKING

"But not the daughter?"

the mother anyhow."

"No, and you seem to dislike the daughter too—which isn't fair."

"OH, I Take THE FAMILY IN THE LUMP. AND I DON'T KNOW THAT WHAT WE'VE been talking of has anything to do with it."

HE DID NOT SEEM INCLINED TO TALK MORE ABOUT THE GAINSBOROUGHS, THOUGH HIS FROWN TOLD HER THAT SOMETHING DISTASTEFUL WAS STILL IN HIS THOUGHTS. WHAT HE HAD SAID WAS BNOUGH TO ROUSE IN HER A GREAT

INTEREST AND CURCOSITY ABOUT THIS GIRL WHO WAS HIS HEIR. QUESTIONS AND RIGHTS ATTRACTED HER MIND VERY LITTLE TILL THEY CAME TO MEAN PEOPLE, THEN SHE WAS KEEN ON THE TRACK OF THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE MATTER. THE GIRL Whom he chose to call his heir was really the owner of Blent!

"Are you going to ask us to the funeral?" she said.

"Are you going to ask us to the funeral?" she said.

"I'M NOT COING TO ASK ANYBODY. THE CHURCHYARD IS FREE, THEY CAN COME
if they like."

"I shall come. Shall you dislike my coming?"

"Oh, no." He was undisguisedly indifferent and almost bored.

"And then I shall see Cecily Gainsborough."

"HAVE A GOOD LOOK AT HER. YOU'LL NOT HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE—AT BLENT anyhow. She'll never come here again."

She looked at him in wonder, in a sort of fear.

"How hard you are sometimes," she said. "The poor girl's done nothing to you."

He shook his head impatiently and came to a stand on the road.
"You're going back? Good-by, Lord Tristram."

"I'M NOT CALLED THAT TILL AFTER THE FUNERAL," HE TOLD HER, LOCKING AS suspicious as he had in the earliest days of their acquaintance.

"AND WILL YOU LET ME GO ON LIVING AT MERRION—OR COMING EVERY SUMMER anyhow?"

"Do you think of coming again?"
"I want to," she answered with some nervousness in her manner.

"And Maior Duplay?" He smiled slightly.

"OH, NO," SAID HARRY, AGAIN WITH THE WEARY INDIFFERENCE THAT SEEMED TO have fastened on him now.

"I don't know whether he would want. Should you object?"

Swinkerton." "Good Lord!"

"I'VE BEEN GOSSIPING." SHE SAID. "WITH MRS TRUMBLER AND MISS.

"MISS SWINKERTON SAYS YOUR ENGAGEMENT TO JAME WILL BE ANNOUNCED.

"You don't mean to tell me anything about it?"

directly after the funeral."
"And Major Duplay says that directly it's announced——!"

"Really, I don't see why I should. Well, if you like—I want to marry her."

Mina had really known this well for a long while, yet she did not like to Hear IT. She had been spinning fances about the man; what he had in

THOUGH SHE WOULD HAVE AFRECATED THE DRAMATIC SIDE OF IT, HAD HE told her of his idea of living with the big check by him.

than that."
"SHE WON'T MARRY ME?" HE WAS NOT LOOKING AT HER, AND HE SPOKE
rather absently.

"I CAN'T HELP THINKING THAT SOMEHOW YOU'LL DO SOMETHING MORE EXCITING

"I DON'T SUPPOSE SHE'LL REPUSE YOU, BUT—NO, I'VE JUST A FEELING. I CAN'T explain."

expiant. "A FELING? What FELING?" He was irritable, but his attention was

caught again.
"That something more's waiting for you."

"That it's my business to go on affording you amusement perhaps?" MINA GLANCED AT HIM: HE WAS SMILING: HE HAD BECOME GOODtempered.

"Oh. I don't expect you to do it for that reason, but if you do it——"

"Do what?" he asked, laughing outright.

"I DON'T KNOW. BUT IF YOU DO. I SHALL BE THERE TO SEE-LOOKING SO HARD AT YOU. MR TRISTRAM." SHE PAUSED, AND THEN ADDED, "I SHOULD LIKE CECILY Gainsborough to come into it too."

"Confound Cecily Gainsborough! Good-by." said Harry.

HE LEFT WITH HER TWO MAIN IMPRESSIONS: THE FIRST WAS THAT HE HAD NOT THE LEAST LOVE FOR THE GIRL WHOM HE MEANT TO MARRY: THE SECOND THAT HE HARDLY CARED TO DENY TO HER THAT HE HATED CECILY GAINSBOROUGH because she was the owner of Blent.

"ALL THE SAME," SHE THOUGHT, "I SUPPOSE HE'LL MARRY JANIE, AND I'M CERTAIN HE'LL KEEP BLENT." YET HE SEEMED TO TAKE NO PLEASURE IN HIS PROSPECTS AND JUST AT THIS MOMENT NOT MUCH IN HIS POSSESSIONS. MINA WAS PUZZLED, BUT DID NOT GO SO FAR WRONG AS TO CONCEIVE HIM conscience-stricken. She concluded that she must wait for light.

XI

A Phantom by the Pool

IN A QUITE LITTLE STREET RUNNING BETWEEN THE FULHAM AND THE KING'S ROAD, IN A ROW OF SMALL HOUSES NOT YET IMPROVED OUT OF EXISTENCE. THERE WAS ONE HOUSE SMALLEST OF ALL. WITH THE SMALLEST FRONT, THE SMALLEST BACK, AND THE SMALLEST GARDEN. THE WHOLE THING WAS AI MOST IMPOSSIBLY SMALL. A PECULIARITY PROPERLY REFLECTED IN THE RENT WHICH MR GAINSBOROUGH PAID TO THE FIRM OF SLOYD, SLOYD, AND GURNEY FOR THE FAG-END OF A LONG LEASE. HE DID SOME PROFESSIONAL WORK FOR SLOYDS FROM TIME TO TIME, AND THAT MEMBER OF THE FIRM WHO HAD LET MERRION LODGE TO MINA ZABRISKA WAS ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH HIM: SO THAT PERHAPS THE RENT WAS A LITTLE LOWER STILL THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN OTHERWISE. EVEN TRIFLING REDUCTIONS COUNTED AS IMPORTANT THINGS IN THE GAINSBOROUGH BUDGET BEING THIS SMALL THE HOUSE WAS NATURALLY FULL! THE THREE PEOPLE WHO LIVED THERE WERE THEWSELVES ENOUGH TO ACCOUNT FOR THAT. BUT IT WAS ALSO LINNATURALLY FULL BY REASON OF MR GAINSBOROUGH'S HABIT OF ACCUIRING OLD FURNITURE OF NO VALUE, AND NEW BRIC-À-BRAC WHOSE WORTH COULD BE EXPRESSED ONLY BY MINUS SIGNS. THESE THINGS FLOODED FLOORS AND WALLS, AND OVERFLOWED ON TO THE STRIP OF GRAVEL BEHIND. FROM TIME TO TIME MANY OF THEM DISAPPEARED: THERE WERE PERIODICAL REVOLTS ON CECILY'S PART, RESULTING IN CLEARANCES: THE GAPS WERE SOON MADE GOOD BY A FRESH INFLUX OF THE ABSOLUTELY UNDESIRABLE. WHEN SLOYD CAME HE LOOKED ROUND WITH A PROFESSIONAL DESPAIR THAT THERE WAS NOT A THING IN THE PLACE WHICH WOULD FETCH A SOVERBIGN! SUCH IS THE BND OF SEEKING BEAUTY ON AN EMPTY PURSE, SOME FIND A PATHOS IN IT, BUT IT IS MORE GENERALLY REGARDED AS A FOLLY IN THE SEEKER. A WRONG TO HIS dependents, and a nuisance to his friends.

ARCHITECT—BE CALLED A NUISANCE, UNLESS BY HARRY TRISTRAMS CAPRICIOUS PLEASURE. FOR HE WAS VERY UNOBTRUSIVE, SMALL LIKE HIS HOUSE, LEAN LIKE HIS PURSE, SHABBY AS HIS FURNITURE, HUMBLER THAN HIS BRIC-À-BRAC. HE ASKED VERY LITTLE OF THE WORLD: IT GAVE HIM HALF. AND HE DID NOT COMPLAIN. HE WAS NEVER PROUD OF ANYTHING, BUT HE WAS GRATIFIED BY HIS HONORABLE DESCENT AND BY HIS ALLIANCE WITH THE TRISTRAMS. THE FAMILY INSTINCT WAS VERY STRONG IN HIM. AMONG THE RUBBISH HE BOUGHT SOMEBODY BLSE'S PEDIGREE WAS OFTEN TO BE FOUND. HIS WIFE'S HUNG FRAMED ON THE WALL (BNDING WITH "ADELAIDE LOUISA AIMÉE" IN LARGE LETTERS FOR ONE BRANCH, AND "CEOLY" IN SMALL FOR THE OTHER): HIS OWN WAS THE CONSTANT SUBJECT OF UNPROFITABLE SEARCHINGS IN COUNTY HISTORIES—ONE ASPECT OF HIS REWARKABLE GENIUS FOR THE UNREMUNERATIVE IN ALL ITS RESPECTABLE FORMS. HE WORKED VERY HARD AND GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF DOING NOTHING—AND THE IMPRESSION PERHAPS. POSSESSED THE HIGHER TRUTH. ANYHOW, WHILE HE AND HIS HAD (THANKS TO A

IN NO OTHER WAY COULD GAINSBOROUGH-MELTON JOHN GAINSBOROUGH.

VERY SMALL PROPERTY WHICH CAME WITH THE LATE MRS GAINSBOROUGH) ALWAYS JUST ENOUGH TO EAT. THEY HAD ALWAYS JUST NOT ENOUGH OF ANYTHING else: short commons were the rule. AND NOW THEY WERE GOING TO BLENT, SLOYD, CALLING ON A MATTER OF BUSINESS AND PLEASANTLY EXCUSING HIS INTRUSION BY THE PAYMENT OF SOME FEES. HAD HEARD ABOUT IT FROM GAINSBOROUGH, "THS'LL JUST TAKE US TO BLENT!" THE LITTLE GENTLEWAN HAD OBSERVED WITH SATISFACTION AS HE WAVED THE SLIP OF PAPER. SLOYD KNEW BLENT AND COULD TAKE AN INTEREST:

HE DESCRIBED IT. RAISING HIS VOICE SO THAT IT TRAVELLED BEYOND THE ROOM and REACHED THE HAMMOOK IN THE GARDEN WHERE CECILY LAY. SHE LIKED A HAMMOCK, AND HER FATHER COULD NOT STAND CHINA FIGURES AND VASES ON IT, SO THAT IT SECURED HER WHERE TO LAY HER HEAD. GAINSBOROUGH WAS VERY FUSSY OVER THE NEWS; A DEEPER BUT QUIETER EXCITEMENT GLOWED IN

CECILY'S EYES AS. LISTENING TO SLOYD, SHE FEIGNED TO PAY NO HEED. SHE HAD DESIGNS ON THE CHECK BEAUTY UNADORNED MAY MEAN SEVERAL

THINGS: BUT MORALISTS CANNOT BE RIGHT IN TWISTING THE COMMENDATION OF IT

SLOYD CAME TO THE DOOR WHICH OPENED ON THE GARDEN. AND GREETED HER. HE WAS AS SMART AS USUAL. HIS TIE A NEW CREATION, HIS HAT MRRORING THE SLIN CECLY WAS SHARRY FROM NECESSITY AND SOMEWHAT TOUZLED FROM LOLLING IN THE HAMMOOK. SHE LOOKED UP AT HIM, SMILING IN a lazv amusement.

into a eulogium on thread-bare frocks. She must have a funeral frock.

"Do you ever wear the same hat twice?" she asked. "Must have a good hat in my profession. Miss Gainsborough, You NEVER KNOW WHERE YOU'LL BE SENT FOR. THE DUCHESS OF THIS, OR LADY

THAT, LOSES HER MONEY AT CARDS—OR THE EARL DROPS A BIT AT NEWWARKET -M IST LET THE HOUSE FOR THE SEASON-SENDS OFF FOR ME-M ISTN'T CATCH.

"Yes. I see!" "Besides, you may say what you like, but a gentlewan ought to wear a good hat. It stamps him, Miss Gainsborough."

"Yours positively illumnates you. I could find the way by you on the darkest night."

"WITH JUST A LEETLE TOUCH OF OIL——" HE ADMITTED CAUTIOUSLY, NOT QUITE SURE HOW FAR SHE WAS SERIOUS IN THE ADMIRATION HER EYES SEEMED TO EXPRESS. "WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING WITH YOURSELF?" HE ASKED. breaking off after his sufficient confession.

"I'VE BEEN DRAWING UP ADVERTISEMENTS OF MY OWN ACCOMPLISHMENTS." SHE SAT UP SUDDENLY, "OH, WHY DIDN'T I ASK YOU TO HELP ME? YOU'D HAVE MADE ME SOUND FLIGIBLE AND DESIRABLE. AND HANDSOME AND SPACIOUS. and all the rest of it. And I found nothing at all to say!"

"What are you advertising for?"

me in an old hat!"

"SOMBODY WHO KNOWS LESS FRENCH THAN I DO. BUT I SHALL WAIT TILL WE

COME BACK NOW." SHE YAWNED A LITTLE. "I DON'T IN THE LEAST WANT TO EARN. MY LIVING. YOU KNOW." SHE ADDED CANDIDLY. "AND THERE'S NO WAY I COULD. honestly. I don't really know any French at all."

SLOYD REGARDED HER WITH MINGLED PLEASURE AND PAIN. HIS TASTE WAS FOR MORE ROBUST BEAUTY AND MORE STRIKING RAIMENT, AND SHE-NO. SHE WAS NOT NEAT. YET HE DECIDED THAT SHE WOULD, AS HE PUT IT, PAY FOR DRESSING:

SHE WANTED SOME PROCESS ANALOGOUS TO THE THOROUGH REPAIR WHICH HE LOVED TO SEE APPLIED TO OLD HOUSES. THEN SHE WOULD BE ATTRACTIVE—NOT his sort, of course, but still attractive.

"I WONDER IF YOU'LL MEET MADAME ZABRISKA. THE LADY I LET MERRION LODGE to, and the gentleman with her, her uncle." "LEXPECT NOT, MY COUSIN INVITES US FOR THE FUNERAL. It'S ON SATURDAY, I

SUPPOSE WE SHALL STAY THE SUNDAY. THAT'S ALL. AND I DON'T SUPPOSE WE SHALL SEE ANYBODY. TO SPEAK TO, ANYHOW." HER AIR WAS VERY CARELESS: the whole thing was represented as rather a bore. "You should make a longer visit—I'm sure his lordship will be DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU, AND IT'S A CHARMING NEIGHBORHOOD, A VERY desirable neighborhood indeed."

"I DARE SAY, BUT DESIRABLE THINGS DON'T GENERALLY COME OUR WAY, MR. Slovd, or at any rate not much of them."

"It's pretty ood to think it'd all be yours is—if anything happened to LORD TRISTRAM." HIS TONE SHOWED A MIXTURE OF AMUSEMENT AND AWE. SHE WAS WHAT HE SAW—SHE MIGHT BECOME MY LADY! THE INCONGRUITY REACHED HIS SENSE OF HUMOR, WHILE HER PROXIMITY TO A NOBLE STATUS nearly made him take off his hat. "IT MAY BE PRETTY ODD." SHE SAID INDOLENTLY. "BUT IT DOESN'T DO ME MUCH.

good, does it?"

This last rewark summed up the attitude which Cecily had always.

ADOPTED ABOUT BLENT. AND SHE CHOSE TO MAINTAIN IT NOW THAT SHE WAS AT LAST TO SEE BLENT. PROBABLY HER FATHER'S FAMILY INSTINCT HAD DRIVEN HER INTO AN INSINCERE OPPOSITION: OR SHE DID NOT CONSIDER IT DIGNIFIED TO SHOW INTEREST IN RELATIVES WHO HAD SHOWN NONE IN HER. SHE HAD NEVER BEEN ASKED TO BLENT. IF SHE WAS ASKED NOW IT WAS AS A DUTY: AS A DUTY SHE WOULD GO. HARRY DID NOT MONOPOLIZE THE TRISTRAM BLOOD OR THE TRISTRAM PRIDE BUT THIS ATTITUDE WAS NOT VERY COMPREHENSIBLE TO HER PRESENT COMPANION. AS A PERSONAL TASTE. MR SLOYD WOULD HAVE LIKED TO BE CONNECTED. HOWEVER REMOTELY, WITH THE ARISTOCRACY, AND, IF HE HAD BEEN, WOULD HAVE LET HIS SOCIAL CIRCLE HEAR A GOOD DEAL ABOUT IT: EVEN A BUSINESS CONNECTION WAS SOMETHING. AND SUFFERED NO LOSS OF

YET IN HER HEART SHE WAS ON FIRE WITH AN EXCITEMENT WHICH SLOYD WOULD HAVE WONDERED AT. AND WHICH MADE HER FATHER'S FUSSY NERVOUSNESS SEEM ARSURD. AT LAST SHE WAS TO SEE WITH HER EYES THE THINGS SHE HAD. ALWAYS HEARD OF. SHE WAS TO SEE BLENT, ADDIE TRISTRAM INDEED SHE COULD NO LONGER SEE: THAT HAD ALWAYS BEEN DENIED TO HER. AND THE LOSS WAS IRREPARABLE. BUT EVEN THE DEAD LADY TRISTRAM SHE WOULD SOON BE

ABLE TO REALIZE FAR BETTER THAN SHE HAD YET DONE: SHE WOULD PUT HER INTO HER SURROUNDINGS. AND HARRY WOULD BE THERE. THE COUSIN WHO HAD NEVER BEEN COUSINLY. THE YOUNG MAN WHOM SHE DID NOT KNOW AND WHO

importance in his practised hands.

WAS A FACTOR OF SUCH IMPORTANCE IN HER LIFE. SHE HAD DREAMS IN ABUNDANCE ABOUT THE EXPEDITION: AND IT WAS IN VAIN THAT REASON SAID. "IT'LL BE ALL OVER IN THREE DAYS. THEN BACK TO THE LITTLE HOUSE AND THE NEED FOR THAT ADVERTISEMENT!" LUCKLY, THIS SORT OF SUGGESTION, MADE BY REASON, NEVER SOUNDS PROBABLE, HOWEVER WILL REASON PROVES TO US

THAT IT MUST COME TO PASS. CECILY WAS SURE THAT AT LAST-AH. AT LAST!-A CHANGE IN LIFE HAD COME. LIFE HAD BEEN ALWAYS SO VERY MUCH THE SAME: CHANGES GENERALLY NEED MONEY, AND MONEY HAD NOT BEEN HERS.

KNOWLEDGE USUALLY NEEDS MONEY TOO, AND OF THE KINDS OF LIFE OUTSIDE

HER OWN NARROW SPHERE SHE WAS VERY IGNORANT. BEAUTIFUL THINGS ALSO NEED MONEY: OF THEM SHE HAD SEEN AND BNJOYED VERY LITTLE: ONLY THE

PARODIES CAME TO THE SMALL HOUSE IN THE SMALL ROAD. ALL THESE THINGS

admitted it to her father when she said with a little laugh:
"I don't suppose anybody ever was so excited over a funeral before!"
BUT PER-NAPS THERE WAS KINDRANCE IN THAT REWARK TOO. IT HAS BEEN SEEN,

FOR INSTANCE, THAT MISS SWINKERTON AND HER FRIENDS COULD BE VERY EXCITED. ALTHOUGH THEY HAD NOT THE EXCUSE OF YOUTH, OF DREAMS, OR OF

"It's begun!" Ceolly said to herself when, three days afterward, they got out of their throad ass carriage and got into the Landau that waited

any kinship with the Tristrams.

harness?"

answered, laughing.

JOINED TO MAKE HER FEEL THAT A GREAT MOMENT WAS AT HAND; SHE MIGHT AND DID DERIDE HERSELF. BUT THE FEELING WAS THERE. AND AT LAST SHE

FOR THEM. THE FOOTMAN, TOUCHING HIS HAT, ASKED IF MISS GAINSBOROUGH
HAD BROUGHT A MAID. ("THE MAID," NOT "A MAID," WAS THE FORM OF
REPERENCE FAMILIAR TO MISS GAINSBOROUGH.) HER FATHER WAS IN NEW
BLACK, SHE WAS IN NEW BLACK, THE TWO TRUNKS HAD BEEN WELL POLISHED;
and the seats of the landau were very soft.

"THEY DON'T USE THE FITZHUBERT CREST. I OBSERVE." REMARKED

GAINSBOROUGH, "ONLY THE TRISTRAM FOX. DID YOU NOTICE IT ON THE

"I WAS GAZING WITH ALL MY EYES AT THE CORONET ON THE PANEL." SHE

A TALL AND ANGULAR LADY CAME UP AND SPOKE TO THE FOOTMAN, AS HE WAS about to mount the box.

"AT TWO ON SATURDAY, MSS," THEY HEARD HIM REPLY. MISS SWINKERTON NODDED, AND WALKED SLOWLY PAST THE CARRAGE, GIVING THE COCUPANTS A

"AT TWO ON SATURDAY, MISS," THEY HEARD HIM REPLY. MISS SWINKERTON NODDED, AND WALKED SLOWLY PAST THE CARRAGE, GIVING THE COCURANTS A LESURELY STARE. OF COURSE MISS S. HAD KNOWN THE TIME OF THE PLUBRAL QUITE WELL; NOW HER INTIMATES WOULD BE MADE EQUALLY WELL ACQUAINTED with the appearance of the visitors.

BLENT WAS IN FULL BEAUTY THAT SUMMER EVENING, AND THE GIRL SAT IN

FOX AGAIN, ABOVE THE DOOR IN THE CENTRAL TOWER. THEY WERE USHERED INTO THE LIBRARY. GAINSBOROUGH'S EYES RAN OVER THE BOOKS WITH A LONGING BWIOUS GLANCE: HIS DAUGHTER TURNED TO THE WINDOW. TO LOOK AT THE BLENT. AND UP TO MERRON, A FLINNY REVEWBRANCE OF SLOYD CROSSED HER MIND. AND SHE SMILED. HAD SHE ALREADY SO CALIGHT THE AIR OF THE PLACE THAT SLOVE SEEMED TO HER BOTH REMOTE AND VERY PLEBBAN? TURNING HER HEAD. SHE SAW THE LEFT WING WITH THE ROW OF WINDOWS THAT LIGHTED THE LONG GALLERY: SHE HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH A ROOM IN A PRIVATE HOUSE. AND THOUGHT THERE MUST BE SEVERAL ROOMS IN THAT WING. A MAN-SERVANT BROUGHT IN TEA. AND TOLD THEM THAT MR TRISTRAM WAS ENGAGED IN PRESSING BUSINESS AND BEGGED TO BE EXCUSED: DINNER WOULD BE AT 8.15. DISAPPOINTED AT HER HOST'S INVISIBILITY. SHE GAVE HER FATHER TEA WITH A LANGUID AIR. THE LITTLE MAN WAS NERVOUS AND EXCITED: HE WALKED THE CARPET CAREFULLY: BUT SOON HE POUNCED ON A BOOK-A COUNTY HISTORY -AND SAT DOWN WITH IT. AFTER A FEW MINUTES' IDLENESS CECILY ROSE. STROLLED INTO THE HALL. AND THENCE OUT INTO THE GARDEN. THE HUSH OF THE house had become oppressive to her.

ENTRANCED SLENCE AS THEY DROVE BY THE RIVER AND CAME WHERE THE OLD HOUSE STOOD. THE BLINDS WERE DOWN, THE ESCUTIOHEON, WITH THE TRISTRAM

INDULGING HER THRST SO LONG UNSATISFIED. SHE HAD SEEN LARGER PLACES, such palaces as all the folk of London are allowed to see. The present scene was new. And in the room above Lay Addie Tristram in her coffin—the Lovely strance woman of whom her mother had told her. She would not see Lady Tristram, but she seemed now to see all her.

YES. EVERYTHING WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL: SHE FELT THAT AGAIN. AND DRANK IT IN.

SHE WOULD NOT SEE LADY TRISTRAM, BUT SHE SEEMED NOW TO SEE ALL HER
LIFE AND TO BE ABLE TO PICTURE HER, TO UNDERSTAND WHY SHE DID THE THINGS
THEY TALKED OF, AND WHAT MANNER OF WOMAN SHE HAD BEEN. SHE
WANDERED TO THE LITTLE BRIDGE. THE STREAM BELOW WAS THE BLENT!

GEOGRAPHES MIGHT TREAT THE RIVULET WITH SCANTY NOTICE AND WITH POOR RESPECT, TO HER IT WAS JORDAN—THE SACRED RIVER. MIGHT NOT ITS GOD HAVE BEEN ANGESTIOR TO ALL THE TRISTRANS? IN SUCH A PLACE AS THIS ONE COULD

HAVE MANY SUCH FANCIES; THEY WOULD COME TO FEED THE MIND AND MAKE IT GROW. TO TRANSFORM IT INTO SOMETHING THAT COULD APPRECATE POETRY. A SHORT COMMONS THERE CAME THIS BOUNTIFUL FEAST TO HER SOUL. SHE FELT HERSELE A TRISTRAM A TURN OF CHANCE MICHT HAVE MADE ALL THIS HER OWN. HER BREATH SEEMED TO STOP AS SHE THOUGHT OF THIS. THE IDEA NOW WAS FAR DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IT HAD SOUNDED WHEN SLOYD GAVE IT LITTERANCE IN THE TINY STRIP OF GARDEN BEHIND THE TINY HOUSE. AND SHE HAD GREETED IT. WITH SCORN AND A MOCKING SMILE. SHE DID NOT WANT ALL THIS FOR HER OWN. BUT SHE DID WANT-HOW SHE WANTED!-TO BE ALLOWED TO STOP AND LOOK AT IT. TO STAY LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE IT PART OF HER AND HAVE IT TO CARRY BACK WITH HER TO HER HOME BETWEEN THE KING'S ROAD AND THE FULHAM Road in London. SHE CROSSED THE BRIDGE AND WALKED UP THE VALLEY. TWENTY MINUTES BROUGHT HER TO THE POOL. IT OPENED ON HER WITH A NEW SURPRISE. THE SUN HAD JUST LEFT IT AND ITS DARKNESS WAS TOUCHED BY MYSTERY. THE STEEP WOODED BANK OPPOSITE CAST A DULL HEAVY SHADOW ACROSS HALF THE SURFACE: THE LOW LAPPING OF THE WATER SOUNDED LIKE SOMEBODY WHISPERING OLD SECRETS THAT SHE SEEMED HALF TO HEAR. GARRULOUS HISTORIES OF THE DEAD-THE DEAD WHOSE BLOOD WAS IN HER VEINS-OLD GLORIES. OLD SCANDALS. OLD TRIFLES. ALL MIXED TOGETHER. ALL OF GREAT

BIG ROSE-TREE CLIMBED THE WALL OF THE RICHT WING. WHO HAD PICKED ITS BLOSSOMS AND THROUGH HOW MANY YEARS? ITS FLOWERS MUST OFTEN HAVE ADDRAND ADDIF TRISTRAMS LING IRRASSED LOVE INFSS. AFTER THE YEARS OF

GLORIES, OLD SCANDALS, OLD TRIFLES, ALL MXED TOGETHER, ALL OF GREATINFORTANCE IN THE VALLEY OF THE BLENT. WHO CARES ABOUT SUCH THINGS IN LONDON, ABOUT ANYBODY'S FAMILY, OR ANYBODY HINSELF? THERE IS NO TIME FOR SUCH THINGS IN LONDON. IT IS VERY DIFFERENT IN THE VALLEY OF THE BLENT WHEN THE SUN SLOW AND THE CRY OF A BIRD MAKES A SOUND TOO SHAILL TO be a vicil or to the contribution.

the sun is low and the day of a bird marks a sound too shall to be welcome.

Turning by Chance to Look up the road toward Mingham, she saw a

MAN COMING DOWN THE HILL. HE WAS SAUNTERING IDLY ALONG, BEATING THE
GRASS BY THE ROAD-SIDE WITH HIS STICK. SUDDENLY HE STOPPED SHORT, PUT

HIS HAND ABOVE HIS EYES, AND GAVE HER A LONG LOOK; HE SEEMED TO start. Then he began to walk toward her with a rapid eager stride. She TURNED AWAY AND STROLLED ALONG BY THE POOL ON HER WAY BACK TO BLENT

UNCOMPROMSING STRAIGHTNESS IN HER FACE. SHE KNEW HIM AT ONCE, HE MUST BE HARRY TRISTRAM. WAS LOUNGING ABOUT THE ROADS HIS PRESSING business?

"I BEG YOUR PARCON," HE SAID WITH A CUROUS APPEARANCE OF AGITATION. "I am Harry Tristram, and you must be———?"

"CECLY GAINSBOROUGH," SAID SHE WITH A DISTANT MANNER, INCLINED TO BE OFFENDED THAT THEIR MEETING SHOULD BE BY ACCIDENT. WHY HAD HE NOT RECEIVED HIS GUESTS IF HE HAD NOTHING TO DO BUT LOUNGE ABOUT THE roads?

"YES, I WAS SURE. THE MOMENT I THOUGHT, I WAS SURE." HE TOOK NO HEED OF HER MANNER, BUGROSSED IN SOME PREDOCUPATION OF HIS OWN. "AT FIRST I WAS STARTLED." HE SMILED NOW, AS HE OFFERED HER HIS HAND. THEN HE RECOLLECTED. "YOU MUST FORGIVE ME FOR BEING OUT. I HAVE BEEN HARD AT WORK ALL DAY, AND THE CRAVING FOR THE EVENING WAS ON ME. I WENT OUT WITHOUT WITHOUT THINKS HER."

HALL. BUT HE WOLLD NOT BE DENIED; HIS TREAD CAME NEARER; HE OVERTOOK HER AND HALTED ALMOST BY HER SIDE. RAISING HIS HAT AND GAZING WITH

"They LIED FOR ME. I FORGOT TO LEAVE ANY MESSAGE. I'M NOT GENERALLY discourteous."

His apology disarmed her and made her resentment seem petty.

"How could you think of us at such a time? It's good of you to have us

"My mother wanted you to come." He added no welcome of his own. "You never saw her, did you?" he asked a moment later.

"They said you were engaged on pressing business."

at all."

CEOLY SHOOK HER HEAD. SHE WAS RATHER CONFUSED BY THE STEADY GAZE OF HS EYES. DID COLISIN HARRY ALWAYS STARE AT PEOPLE AS HARD AS THAT?

YET IT WAS NOT EXACTLY A STARE, IT WAS TOO THOUGHTFUL, TOO RUMNATIVE, TOO

"LET'S WALK BACK TOGETHER YOU'VE HAD A LOOK AT THE PLACE ALREADY perhaps?"

"It's very beautiful." "Yes." he assented absently. as they began to walk.

sauntered along.

though."

unconscious for that

IF SHE DID NOT STARE, STILL SHE USED HER EYES, CURIOUSLY STUDYING HIS FACE

WITH ITS SUGGESTION OF STRENGTH AND THAT SOMEHOW RATHER INCONSISTENT

SHE SAW SOMETHING THAT PUZZLED HER; MINA ZABRISKA COULD HAVE TOLD HER WHAT IT WAS, BUT SHE HERSELF DID NOT SUCCEED IN DENTIFYING HARRY'S WATCHING LOOK. SHE WAS MERELY PUZZLED AT A CERTAIN SHADE OF EXPRESSION IN THE EYES. SHE HAD NOT SEEN IT AT THE FIRST MOMENT, BUT IT

WAS THERE NOW AS HE TURNED TO HER FROM TIME TO TIME WHILE THEY

HINT OF SENSITIVE NESS. HE WAS GLOOMY: THAT WAS JUST NOW ONLY PROPER.

"THAT'S MERRON, OUR DOWER-HOUSE. BUT IT'S LET NOW TO A FUNNY LITTLE WOWAN, MADAME ZABRISKA. SHE'S RATHER A FRIEND OF MINE, BUT HER UNOLE, WHO LIVES WITH HER, DOESN'T LIKE ME." HE SMILED AS HE SPOKE OF the Major. "She's very much interested in you."

"In me? Has she heard of me?"

"She hears of most things. She's as sharp as a needle. I like her

HE SAID NO MORE TILL THEY WERE BACK IN THE GARDEN; THEN HE PROPOSED

that they should sit down on the seat by the river.

"MY MOTHER USED TO SIT HERE OFTEN," HE SAID. "SHE ALLWAYS LOVED TO SEE THE SUN GO DOWN FROM THE GARDEN. SHE DIDN'T READ OR DO ANYTHING; SHE just sat watching."

"Thinking?" Cecily suggested.

"WELL, HARDLY. LETTING THOUGHTS HAPPEN IF THEY WANTED TO, PERHAPS. SHE WAS ALWAYS RATHER—RATHER PASSIVE ABOUT THINGS, YOU KNOW. THEY TOOK HOLD OF HER IF—WELL, AS I SAY, IF THEY WANTED TO." HE TURNED TO HER Quickly as he asked, "Are you at all like that?"

anything. And, anyhow, I'm quite different from what I was yesterday."
"From vesterday?"

"I BELIEVE I'M ONLY JUST BEGINNING TO FIND OUT THAT I'M ANYTHING OR LIKE

"Yes. Just by coming here. I think."

"That's what I mean! Things do take hold of you then?"

"THS PLACE DOES APPARENTLY," SHE ANSWERED LAUGHING, AS SHE LEANED BACK ON THE SEAT, THROMING HER ARM BEHIND HER AND RESTING HER HEAD ON IT. SHE CAUGHT HIM LOCKING AT HER AGAIN WITH MARKED AND ALMOST STARTLED INTENSITY. HE WAS RATHER STRANGE WITH HIS ALTERNATIONS OF apparent forgetfulness and this embarrassing scrutiny.

"TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF," HE ASKED, OR RATHER COMMANDED, SO BRUSQUE and direct was the request.

SHE TOLD HIM ABOUT THE SMALL HOUSE AND THE SMALL LIFE SHE HAD LED IN IT,
EVEN ABOUT THE PURNITURE AND THE BRIC-A-BRAC, CONFESSING TO HER
COCASIONAL CLEARANCES AND THE DECEPTION SHE HAD TO FRACTISE ON HER
FATHER ABOUT THEM. HE WAS VERY SLENT, BUT HE WAS A COCOD LISTENER.
SOON HE BEGAN TO SMOKE, BUT DID NOT ASK LEAVE. THIS MIGHT BE
RUDENESS, BUT SEEWED A RATHER COUSNLY SORT OF RUDENESS, AND WAS
readily forgiven.

"AND SUDDENLY I COME TO ALL THIS!" SHE MURMURED. THEN WITH A START SHE ADDED, "BUT I'M FORGETTING YOUR MOTHER'S DEATH AND WHAT YOU MUST FEEL, and chattering about myself!"

"I ASKED YOU TO TALK ABOUT YOURSELF. IS IT SUCH A GREAT CHANGE TO COME

"IMMENSE! To COME HERE EVEN FOR A DAY! IMMENSE!" SHE WAVED HER hand a moment and found him following it with his eyes as it moved.
"You don't look," he said slowly, "as if it was any change at all."

"What do you mean?" she asked. Interested in what he seemed to

"You fit in," He MURMURED, LOOKING UP AT THE HOUSE—AT THE WINDOW OF Addie Tristram's room. "And vou're very poor?" he asked.

"Yes. And you----!"
"OH, I'M NOT RICH AS SUCH THINGS GO. THE ESTATE HAS FALLEN IN VALUE VERY
MUCH, YOU KNOW, BUT -----" HE BROKE OFF. FROWNING A LITTLE. "STILL WE'RE

"I should think so. You'd always have it to look at anyhow. What did you think I should be like?"

"Anything in the world but what you are."

comfortable enough." he resumed.

THE TONE WAS AT ONCE TOO SINCERE AND TOO ABSENT FOR A COMPLIMENT.

CECILY KNEW HERSELF NOT TO BE FLAIN; BUT HE WAS REFERRING TO SOMETHING else than that

Gainsboroughs."

"AND YOU DIDN'T LIKE THE GAINSBOROUGHS?" SHE CRIED IN A FLASH OF

"IN FACT I HARDLY THOUGHT OF YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL AT ALL. YOU WERE THE

intuition. "No. I didn't." he admitted.

"Why not?"

here?"

suaaest.

SHE CROSSED HER LESS, STICKING ONE FOOT OUT IN FRONT OF HER AND LOOKING
AT IT THOUGHTFULLY. HE FOLLOWED THE MOVEMENT AND SLOWLY BROKE INTO A
SMILE, IT WAS FOLLOWED BY AN IMPATIENT SHRUG. WITH THE FEMINIE INSTINCT
SHE PUSHED HER GOWN LOWER DOWN, HALF OVER THE FOOT. HARRY LAUGHED.
She looked up. blushing and inclined to be angry.

"A prejudice." answered Harry Tristram after a pause.

"But——" HE ROSE, TOOK SOME PACES ALONG THE LAWN, AND THEN, COMING BACK, STOOD BESIDE HER, STARING AT THE BLENT AND FROWNING rather formidably.

"OH. IT WASN'T THAT," HE SAID, LAUGHING AGAIN RATHER CONTEMPTUOUSLY.

"DID YOU SEE ME WHEN I FIRST SAW YOU BY THE POOL?" HE ASKED IN A moment.

"Yes. How you hurried after me!"

Another pause followed, Harry's fromn giving way to a smle, but a perflexed and reluctant one. Cecly watched him with fuzzled interest

—STILL SITING WITH HER FOOT STUCK OUT IN FRONT OF HER AND HER HEAD RESTING ON THE BEND OF HER ARM, HER EYES LOOKED UPWARD, AND HER LIPS WERE just parted.

"Well, Yes, You HAVE," she Answered, LAUCHING. "BUT A STRANGE COUSIN EXPECTS TO BE EXAMINED PATHER CAREFULLY. DO I PASS MUSTER AMONG THE

EXPECTS TO BE EXAMINED RATHER CAREFULLY. DO I PASS MUSTER AMONG THE Tristrams? Or am I all the hated Gainsborough?"

HE LOCKED AT HER AGAIN AND EARNESTLY. SHE MET THE LOCK WITHOUT

lowering her eyes or altering her position in any particular.

"It's TOO ABSURD!" HE DECLARED, HALF FRETFUL, HALF AMUSED. "YOU'RE
FEATURES AREN'T SO VERY MUCH ALIKE—EXCEPT THE EYES. THEY ARE—AND.

YOUR HAIR'S DARKER, BUT YOU MOVE AND CARRY YOURSELF AND TURN YOUR HEAD AS SHE DID. AND THAT POSITION YOU'RE IN NOW—WHY I'VE SEEN HER IN IT A

thousand times! Your arm there and your foot stuck out——"
His voice grew louder as he went on, his petulant amusement giving way to an agitation imperfectly suppressed.
"What do you mean?" she asked, catching excitement from him.
"Why, MY MOTHER. THAT'S HER ATTITUDE, AND YOUR WALK'S HER WALK, AND YOUR VOICE HER VOICE. YOU'RE HER—ALL OVER! WHY, WHEN I SAW YOU BY THE Pool just now, a hundred yards off, strolling on the bank——"
"Yes?" she half-whispered. "You started, didn't you?"
"YES, I STARTED. I THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT I SAW MY MOTHER'S GHOST. I

thought my mother had come back to Blent. And it is—you!"

He threw out his hands in a gesture of what seemed despair.

XII

Fighters and Doubters

"MISS S. WASN'T SO FAR WRONG AFTER ALL!" EXCLAIMED MINA ZABRISKA, flinging down a letter on the table by her.

IT WAS THREE DAYS AFTER ADDIE TRISTRAMS FUNERAL. MINA HAD ATTENDED THAT CEREMONY, OR RATHER WATCHED IT FROM A LITTLE WAY OFF. SHE HAD SEEN GAINSBORQUEH'S SPARE HUNGLE RIGURE, SHE HAD SEEN TOO, WITH AN ACUTE INTEREST, THE TALL SUM GIRL ALL IN BLACK, HEAVLY VELED, WHO WALKED BESIDE HIM, JUST BEHIND THE NEW LORD TRISTRAM. SHE HAD ALSO, OF COURSE, SEEN ALL THE NEGHBORS WHO WERE LOCKING ON LIKE HERSELF, BUT WHO GAVE THER BEST ATTENTION TO JAME IVER AND DISAPPOINTED MISS S. BY ASKING HARDLY ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GAINSBOROUGHS. LITTLE INDEED WOULD HAVE BEEN SAID CONCERNING THEM EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT GAINSBOROUGH (TRUE TO HIS KNACK OF THE UNLUCKY) CAUGHT A CHILL ON THE OCCASION AND WAS CONFINED TO HIS BED DOWN AT BLENT. A MOST VEXATIOUS COCURRENCE FOR LORD TRISTRAM, SAID MISS S. BUT ONE THAT HE CUGHT TO BEAR PATIENTLY, ADDED MISS TRUMBLER. AND AFTER ALL, BOTH LADIES AGREED, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HARDLY DECENT TO TURN THE GAINSBOROUGHS OUT ON MONDAY, AS IT WAS WELL KNOWN THE NEW LOTH HAD PROPOSED.

But the Gainsboroughs were not in Mina's thoughts just now.

"Nothing is to be made public yet—please remember this. But I want you to know that I have just written to Harry Tristram to say I will marry him. I have had a great deal of trouble, dear Mina, but I think I have done right, looking at it all round. Except my own people I am telling only one friend besides you ("Bob Broadley!"

I WANT YOU TO KNOW: AND PLEASE TELL YOUR UNCLE TOO. I HOPE YOU WILL BOTH GIVE ME YOUR GOOD WISHES. I DO THINK I'M ACTING WISELY: AND I THOUGHT I HAD NO RIGHT TO KEEP HIM WAITING AND WORRYING ABOUT THIS WHEN HE HAS SO MUCH TO THINK OF BESIDES. YOU MUST STAY AT Merrion after Lcome to Blent -- JANE" BARRING THE MATTER OF THE IMMEDIATE ANNOUNCEMENT THEN, MISS S., WAS JUSTIFIED JAME HAD DONE THE OBVIOLISLY RIGHT THING—AND WAS OBVIOLISLY NOT QUITE SURE THAT IT WAS RIGHT. THAT MATTERED VERY LITTLE: IT WAS DONE. IT WAS FOR MINA ZABRISKA—AND OTHERS CONCERNED—TO ADAPT THEWSELVES AND CONFORM THEIR ACTIONS TO THE ACCOMPLISHED FACT. BUT WOULD MAJOR DUPLAY TAKE THAT VIEW? TO MINA WAS INTRUSTED THE DELICATE TASK OF

BREAKING THE NEWS TO HER UNCLE. IT IS THE VIRTUE OF A SOLDIER NOT TO KNOW WHEN HE IS BEATEN: OF A GENERAL NOT TO LET OTHERS KNOW. TO WHAT STANDARD OF MARTIAL CONDUCT WOULD THE MAJOR ADHERE? THIS MATTER OF THE MAJOR WAS IN EVERY WAY A NUISANCE TO HIS NIECE. IN THE FIRST PLACE

SAID MINA WITH A NOD. AS SHE READ THE LETTER THE SECOND TIME). BUT

SHE WANTED TO THINK ABOUT HERSELF AND HER OWN FEELINGS-THE ONE LUXURY OF THE UNHAPPY. SECONDLY SHE WAS AFRAID AGAIN. FOR HARRY SUDDENLY SEEVED TO BE NO PROTECTION NOW, AND THE HORRORS THREATENED BY DUPLAY—THE INTERROGATION. THE LAWYER'S OFFICE, AND THE LIKE— RECOVERED THEIR DREADFULNESS. IT HAD BEEN EASY—PERHAPS PLEASANT— TO SUFFFER FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL FRIEND WHO HAD OPENED HIS HEART TO HER ON THE HILLSIDE. IT BECAME LESS EASY AND CERTAINLY MORE UNPLEASANT TO BE

SACRIFICED FOR JANIE IVER'S fiancé. But Mina, though no longer exultant AND NO MORE FEARLESS. WOULD BE LOYAL AND CONSTANT ALL THE SAME.

SHOULD SHE, AFTER SAVING OTHERS, BE HERSELF A CASTAWAY? SHE EXPERIENCED A LONGING FOR THE SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT OF MR JENKINSON. NEED. SURRLY HE WOULD STAND FRM TOO? HE WAS STILL AT FAIRHOLME. WAS

he included in Janie's "own people"? Had he been told the news?

THE DELICATE TASK! THE IMP'S TEMPER WAS FAR TOO BAD FOR DELICACY: SHE FOUND A POSITIVE PLEASURE IN OUTRAGING IT. SHE TOOK HER LETTER, MARCHED

into the smoking-room, and threw it to (not to say at) her uncle.

BLENT. THE LETTER HAD SUCCEDED, IT SEEMED, IN TAKING AWAY FROM HER life all she wanted, and introducing into it all she did not.

"THS IS VERY SERIOUS," DECLARED THE MAJOR SOLEMALY, "VERY SERIOUS indeed. Mina."

"READ THAT!" SHE SAID AND STRODE OFF TO THE WINDOW TO HAVE A LOOK AT

"DON'T SEE HOW," SNAPPED THE IMP, PRESENTING AN UNWAVERING BACKview to her uncle. "If they like to get married, why is it serious?"

"Pray be reasonable," He urceb. "You must reroeve that the situation I have always contemplated——"

"Well, you can so an contemplating it, can't you, uncle? It won't do much good, but still——"

much good, but still——"
"The situation, I say, has arisen." She heard him get up. walk to the

HEARTH-RUG, AND STRIKE A MATCH. OF COURSE HE WAS GOING TO HAVE A CIGARETTE! HE WOULD SMOKE IT ALL THROUGH WITH EXASPERATING SLOWNESS AND THEN ARRIVE AT AN ODICUS CONCLUSION. MINA HAD NOT BEEN MARRIED FOR NOTHING; SHE KNEW MEN'S WAYS. HE JUSTIFIED HER FORECAST; IT WAS minutes before he spoke again.

"The terms of this letter," he resumed at last, "Fortify me in my purpose it is evident that Miss Iver is included—Largely included—by—er—the supposed position of—er—Mr Tristram."

"Of who?"

"Of the present possessor of Blent."
"IF YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW WHO YOU MEAN, YOU'D BETTER SAY LORD Tristram."

"For the present, if you wish it. I say, she is _____" Duplay's pompous

"FOR THE PRESENT, IF YOU WISH IT. I SAY, SHE IS ———" DUPLAY'S POMPOUS FORWALITY SUDDENLY BROKE DOWN. "SHE'S TAKING HIM FOR HIS TITLE. THAT'S

"You know it's true. What becomes my duty then?"

"I DON'T KNOW AND I DON'T CARE. ONLY I HATE PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT DUTY
WHEN THEY'RE COING TO ——" WELL, ONE MUST STOP SOMEWHERE IN
DESCRIBING ONE'S RELATIVES' CONDUCT. THE IMP STOPPED THERE. BUT THE
SENTENCE REALLY LOST NOTHING; DUPLAY COULD GUESS PRETTY ACCURATELY
What she had been going to say.

"Oh, if you choose to say things like that about your friends!"

all."

LITTLE ABOUT HER OPINON. SHE NETTHER WOULD NOR COULD JUDGE HIS POSITION
FAIRLY; SHE WOULD NOT PERCEIVE HOW HE FELT, HOW RIGHTEOUS WAS HIS
ANGER, HOW HIS FRIENDS WERE BEING CHEATED AND HE WAS BEING
JOCKEYED OUT OF HIS CHANGES BY ONE AND THE SAME UNSCRUPULOUS BIT OF

FORTUNATELY, ALTHOUGH HE WAS VERY DEPENDENT ON HER HELP, HE CARED

IMPOSTURE. HE HAD BROUGHT HIMSELF ROUND TO A MORE SETTLED STATE OF MIND AND HAD GOT HIS CONSCIENCE INTO BETTER ORDER. IF HE WERE ACTING UNSELFISHLY, HE DESERVED COMMENDATION. BUT EVEN IF SELF-INTEREST GUIDED HIM HE WAS FREE OF BLAME. NO MAN IS BOUND TO LET HIMSELF BE SWINDLED. HE DOUBTED SERIOUSLY OF NOTHING NOW EXCEPT HIS POWER TO

upset Harry Tristram's plans. He was resolved to try; Mina must speak
—AND IF MONEY WHER NEEDED, IT MUST COME FROM SOMEWHERE. THE
MERE ASSERTION OF WHAT HE MEANT TO ALLEGE MUST AT LEAST DELAY THIS
HATEFUL MARRAGE. IT MUST BE ADDED.—THOUGH THE MAJOR WAS CAREFUL NOT

TO ADD—THAT IT WOULD ALSO GIVE HARRY TRISTRAM A VERY UNFLEASANT SHOOK; THE WRESTLING BOUT BY THE POOL AND THE LOSS OF THAT SHILLING WERE NOT FORGOTTEN. IT MAY FURTHER BE OBSERVED—THOUGH THE MAJOR COULD NOT

NOT FORGOTTEN. IT MAY FURTHER BE OBSERVED—THOUGH THE MAJOR COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO OBSERVE—THAT HE HAD SUCH AN ESTIMATE OF HIS OWN ATTRACTIONS AS LED HIM TO SEIZE VERY EAGERLY ON ANY EVIDENCES OF LIKING

FOR HARRY'S POSITION, RATHER THAN OF PREFERENCE FOR HARRY HIMSELF, WHICH JANE'S LETTER MIGHT BE CONSIDERED TO AFFORD. THE MAJOR, IN FACT, HAD A

CASE, COOD ARCUMENT MADE IT SEEM A GOOD CASE. IT IS SOMETHING TO HAVE A CASE THAT CAN BE ARCUED AT ALL; MORALITY HAS A SAD HABIT OF

DUR AY WENT DOWN TO FAIRHOUME MISS SWINKERTON PASSED HIM ON THE ROAD AND SMILED SAGACIOUSLY, OH, IF MISS S., HAD KNOWN THE TRUTH ABOUT his errand! A gossip in ignorance has pathos as a spectacle. Mr Neeld was still at Fairholme. He had been pressed to stay and NEEDED LITTLE PRESSING: IN FACT, IN DEFAULT OF THE PRESSURE HE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TAKEN LODGINGS IN THE TOWN. HE COULD NOT GO AWAY: HE HAD SEEN ADDIE TRISTRAM BURIED. AND HER SON WALKING BEHIND THE

LEAVING US WITHOUT A LEG TO STAND ON IN THE AFTERNOON OF THAT DAY

COPEIN CLAD IN HIS NEW DIGNITY. HIS MIND WAS FULL OF THE SITUATION, YET HE HAD SHRUNK FROM DISCUSSING IT FURTHER WITH MINA ZABRISKA. THE FAMILY ANXIFTY AROUT JANIE'S LOVE AFFAIR HAD BEEN ALL ROUND HIM. NOW HE SUSPECTED STRONGLY THAT SOME ISSUE WAS BEING DECIDED UPON. HE

OUGHT TO SPEAK. TO BREAK HIS WORD TO MINA AND SPEAK—OR HE OUGHT TO GO. FROM DAY TO DAY HE MEANT TO GO AND CEASE TO ACCEPT THE HOSPITALITY WHICH HIS SILENCE SEEMED TO ABUSE. BUT HE DID NOT GO. These internal struggles were new in his placid and estimable life: this AFFAIR OF HARRY TRISTRAMS HAD A WAY OF PUTTING PEOPLE IN STRANGE AND

difficult positions. "MIND YOU SAY NOTHING—NOTHING—NOTHING." THAT SENTENCE HAD REACHED HIM ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF AN INVITATION TO TAKE TEA AT MERRION.

OPPORTUNITY OF CONVEYING THE URGENT LITTLE SCRAWL ON THE OTHER SIDE. IT alone with Iver.

—A VAGUE SOME-DAY-WHENLYOU'RE-PASSING SORT OF INVITATION IN NEED'S EYES PLAINLY AND MERBY A PRETEXT FOR WRITING AND AN ARRIVED AT MID-DAY: IN THE AFTERNOON DUPLAY HAD COME AND WAS NOW

THE OUTWARD CALM OF THE GRAY-HAIRED OLD GENTLEWAN WHO SAT ON THE

LAWN AT FAIRHOLME. HOLDING A WEEKLY REVIEW UPSIDE DOWN, WAS NO

INDEX TO THE ALARMING AND DISTURBING QUESTIONS WHICH WERE AGITATING

HIM WITHIN, AT THE PND OF A BLAMFLESS LIFE IT IS HARD TO DISCOVER THAT YOU

MUST DO ONE OF TWO THINGS AND THAT, WHICHEVER YOU DO, YOU WILL FEEL LIKE

A VILLAIN. THE NEWS THAT JOSIAH CHOLDERTON'S JOURNAL WAS GOING OFF VERY

consolation: he did not care about the Journal now. IVER CAME OUT AND SAT DOWN BESIDE HIM WITHOUT SPEAKING. NEELD HASTILY RESTORED HIS PAPER TO A POSITION MORE BEFITTING ITS DIGNITY AND BECAME APPARENTLY ABSORBED IN AN ARTICLE ON Shyness in Elephants: THE SUBJECT WAS TREATED WITH A WEALTH OF ILLUSTRATION AND IN A VENIOF INTROSPECTIVE PHILOSOPHY EXCEEDINGLY INSTRUCTIVE. BUT IT WAS ALL WASTED

on Mr Neeld. He was waiting for Iver: no man could be so silent unless HE HAD SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO SAY OR TO LEAVE UNSAID. AND IMPR WAS

FAIRLY WELL WITH THE TRADE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO GIVE ITS EDITOR ANY

NOT EVEN SMOKING THE O'GAR WHICH HE ALWAYS SMOKED AFTER TEA. NEED D could bear it no longer; he got up and was about to move away. "Stop. Neeld. Do you mind sitting down again for a moment?"

NEELD COULD DO NOTHING BUT COMPLY. THE REVIEW FELL ON THE GROUND BY him and he ceased to struggle with the elephants. "I want to ask your opinion——" "My dear Iver, my opinion! Oh, I'm not a business man, and——"

"It's not business. You know Major Duplay? What do you think of him?"

"I—I've always found him very agreeable." "Yes, so have I. And I've always thought him honest, haven't you?"

NEELD ADMITTED THAT HE HAD NO REASON TO IMPUGN THE MAJOR'S

character.

"And I suppose he's sane." Iver pursued. "But he's just been telling me

THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY THING." HE PAUSED A MOMENT. "I DARE SAY

YOU'VE NOTICED SOMETHING BETWEEN JAME AND YOUNG TRISTRAM? I MAY

AS WELL TELL YOU THAT SHE HAS JUST CONSENTED TO MARRY HIM. BUT I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT EXCEPT SO FAR AS IT COMES INTO THE OTHER MATTER

STORY, BH? ONE'S PREPARED FOR SOMETHING WHERE LADY TRISTRAM WAS involved, but this ——!"

IT WAS FORTUNATE THAT HE DID NOT GLANCE AT NEELD; NEELD HAD TRIED TO APPEAR STARTLED, BUT HAD SUCCEEDED ONLY IN LOOKING SUPREMELY MSEPABLE. BUT MER'S EYES WERE GAZING STRAIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM UNDER brows that frowned heavily.

"NOW, WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO," HE RESUMED, "AND I'M SURE YOU WON'T REPUSE ME, IS THIS. I'M NOLINED TO DISMSS THE WHOLE THING AS A BLUNDER.

I BELIEVE DUPLAY'S HONEST, BUT I THINK CERTAIN FACTS IN HIS OWN POSITION HAVE LED HIM TO BE TOO READY TO BELIEVE A MERE. YARN. BUT I'VE CONSENTED TO SEE MINA AND HEAR WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY. AND I SAID I SHOULD BRING YOU AS A WITNESS. I GO TO MERRON LODGE TO-MORROW FOR THIS PURPOSE, AND I SHALL RELY ON YOU TO ACCOMPANY ME." WITH THAT THE OGAR MADE ITS APPEARANCE, WER LIT IT AND LAY BACK IN HIS CHAIR, BROWNING STILL IN HERRE POTTY AND VEXATION. HE HAD NOT ASKED HIS BRIENT'S

MGHT ACT THAT. OR HE MGHT TEMPORIZE FOR A LITTLE WHILE. THIS WAS WHAT he did.

"IT WOULD MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE IF THIS WERE TRUE?" HIS VOICE SHOOK, but Iver was absorbed.

"I KNEW IT ALL ALONG:" HE MIGHT SAY THAT. "I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT." HE

OPINON BUT HIS SERVICES. IT WAS CHARACTERISTIC OF HIM NOT TO NOTICE THIS FACT. AND THE FACT DID NOTHING TO RELIEVE NEELD'S PITEOUS

embarrassment.

DULINE WAS AUSOIDEU.
"AN ENORMOUS DIFFERENCE." SAID IVER (LADY TRISTRAM HERSELF HAD ONCE

IT'S NOT SNOBBISH IN US NEW MEN TO CONSIDER THAT. IT'S THE RIGHT THING FOR US TO DO, NEELD. OTHER THINGS EQUAL—IF THE MAN'S A DECENT FELLOW AND THE GIRLLLIKES HIM—I SAY IT'S THE RIGHT THING FOR US TO DO. THAT'S THE WAY IT always has happened, and the right way too." Mr Neeld nodded. He had sympathy with these opinions. "BUT IF IT'S TRUE, WHY, WHO'S HARRY TRISTRAM? OH, I KNOW IT'S ALL A FLUKE, A DAMNED FLUKE. IF YOU LIKE. NEELD, AND UNCOMMONLY HARD ON THE BOY. BUT THE LAW'S THE LAW, AND FOR MY OWN PART I'M NOT IN FAVOR OF ALTERING IT. Now do you suppose I want my daughter to marry him, if it's true?"

SAID THE SAME). "I MARRY MY DAUGHTER TO LORD TRISTRAM OF BLENT OR TO-TO WHOM? YOU'LL CALL THAT SNOBBISHNESS, OR SOME PEOPLE WOULD, I SAY

"I suppose you wouldn't." murmured Neeld. "AND THERE'S ANOTHER THING DURLAY SAYS HARRY KNOWS IT-DURLAY SWEARS HE KNOWS IT. WELL THEN. WHAT'S HE DOING? IN MY OPINION HE'S

DECEIVES ME. HE DECEIVES JANIE. IF THE THING EVER COMES OUT, WHERE IS she? He's treated us very badly if it's true." THE MAN, ORDINARILY SO CALM AND QUIET IN HIS RESERVED STRENGTH, BROKE OUT INTO VEHEMENCE AS HE TALKED OF WHAT HARRY TRISTRAM HAD DONE IF THE MAJOR'S TALE WERE TRUE. NEELD ASKED HIMSELF WHAT HIS HOST WOULD SAY OF A FRIEND WHO KNEW THE STORY TO BE TRUE AND YET SAID NOTHING OF IT.

PRACTISING A FRAUD. HE KNOWS HE ISN'T WHAT HE PRETENDS TO BE HE

HE PERCEIVED TOO THAT ALTHOUGH IVER WOULD NOT HAVE FORCED HIS

DAUGHTER'S INCLINATION. YET THE MARRIAGE WAS VERY GOOD IN HIS EYES. THE PROPER END AND THE FINEST CROWN TO HIS OWN CAREER. THIS HAD NEVER COME HOME TO NEELD WITH ANY SPECIAL FORCE BEFORE. IVER WAS ENGLISH

OF THE ENGLISH IN HIS REPRESSION. IN HIS HABIT OF MEETING BOTH GOOD AND BAD LUCK WITH-WELL. WITH SOMETHING LIKE A GRUNT. BUT HE WAS STIRRED.

FEELINGS HOW STOOD MR NEELD? HE SAW NOTHING ADMIRABLE IN HOW AND

where he stood.

NOW: THE SUDDENNESS OF THE THING HAD DONE IT. AND IN FACE OF HIS

"WELL, WE'LL SEE MINA AND HEAR IF SHE'S GOT ANYTHING TO SAY, FANCY THAT LITTLE MONKEY BEING DRAWN INTO A THING LIKE THIS! MEANWHILE WE'LL SAY NOTHING, I DON'T BELIEVE IT. AND I SHALL WANT A LOT OF CONVINCING. UNTIL I AM CONVINCED EVERYTHING STANDS AS IT DID. I RELY ON YOU FOR THAT. NEELD-AND I RELY ON YOU TO COME TO MERRION TO-MORROW. NOT A WORD TO MY WIFE -ABOVE ALL NOT A WORD TO JANIE!" HE GOT UP. TOOK POSSESSION OF NEELD'S REVIEW. AND WALKED OFF INTO THE HOUSE WITH HIS BUSINESS-LIKE auick stride. NEELD SAT THERE. SLOWLY RUBBING HIS HANDS AGAINST ONE ANOTHER BETWEEN HIS KNEES. HE WAS REALIZING WHAT HE HAD DONE. OR RATHER WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM. WHEN HIS LIFE. HIS YEARS, AND WHAT HE CONCEIVED TO BE HIS CHARACTER WERE CONSIDERED. IT WAS A VFRY SURPRISING THING. THIS SILENCE OF HIS-THE CONSPIRACY HE HAD ENTERED INTO WITH MINA ZABRISKA. THE VIEW OF DUTY WHICH THE IMP. OR HARRY, OR THE THOUGHT OF BEAUTIFUL ADDIE TRISTRAM, OR ALL OF THEM TOGETHER, HAD MADE HIM TAKE. SO STRANGE A VIEW FOR HIM! TO RUN COUNTER TO LAW TO OUTRAGE GOOD SENSE. TO SLIGHT THE CLAIMS OF FRIENDSHP. TO SUPPRESS THE TRUTH, TO AID WHAT IVER SO RELENTLESSLY CALLED A FRAUD-ALL THESE WERE STRANGE DOINGS FOR HIM TO BE ENGAGED IN. AND WHY HAD HE DONE IT? THE EXPLANATION WAS AS STRANGE AS THE THINGS THAT HE INVOKED IT TO EXPLAIN. STILL RUBBING HIS HANDS, PALM AGAINST PALM, TO AND FRO, HE SAID very slowly, with wonder and reluctance: "I was carried away. I was carried away by-by romance." THE WORD MADE HIM FEEL A FOOL. YET WHAT OTHER WORD WAS THERE FOR THE OVERWHELMING UNREASONING FEELING THAT AT THE COST OF EVERYTHING THE TRISTRAMS, MOTHER AND SON, MUST KEEP BLENT, THE SON LIVING AND THE MOTHER DEAD. THAT THE SON MUST DWELL THERE AND THE SPIRIT OF THE MOTHER BE ABOUT HIM SHE LOVED IN THE SPOT THAT SHE HAD GRACED? IT WAS VERY RANK ROMANCE INDEED-NO OTHER WORD FOR IT! AND-WILDEST PARADOX-IT. all came out of editing Josiah Cholderton's Journal. BEFORE HE HAD MADE ANY PROGRESS IN UNRAVELLING HIS SKEIN OF

HER FATHER HAD LEFT AND SEEMED TO TAKE HER FATHER'S MOOD WITH IT: THE same oppressive silence settled on her. Neeld broke it this time. "YOU DON'T LOOK VERY MERRY, MISS JANIE," HE SAID, SMILING AT HER AND achieving a plausible jocularity.

PERPLEXITIES HE SAW, JANIE COMING ACROSS THE LAWN. SHE TOOK THE CHAIR.

"Why should I, Mr Neeld?" She glanged at him, "Oh, has father told." vou anvthing?"

"YES, THAT YOU'RE ENGAGED, YOU KNOW HOW TRULY I DESIRE YOUR HAPPINESS. MY DEAR." WITH A PRETTY COURTESY THE OLD MAN TOOK HER hand and kissed it, baring his gray hair the while.

"You're very, very kind, Yes, I've promised to marry Harry Tristram, Not vet, you know. And it isn't to be announced. But I've promised." HE STOLE A GLANCE AT HER. AND THEN ANOTHER. SHE DID NOT LOOK MERRY INDEED. NEELD KNEW HIS IGNORANCE OF FEMININE THINGS. AND MADE GUESSES WITH PROPER DIFFIDENCE: BUT HE CERTAINLY FANCIED SHE HAD BEEN ORYING—OR VERY NEAR IT—NOT SO LONG AGO. YET THE DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM

"I THINK I'VE DONE RIGHT." SHE SAID—AS SHE HAD SAID WHEN SHE WROTE TO MINA. "EVERYBODY WILL BE PLEASED. FATHER'S VERY PLEASED." SUDDENLY SHE PUT OUT HER HAND AND TOOK HOLD OF HIS, GIVING IT A TIGHT GRIP. "OH, but. Mr Neeld, I've made somebody so unhappy."

"I DARE SAY, MY DEAR, I DARE SAY. I WAS A YOUNG FELLOW ONCE. I DARE sav."

"AND HE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT IT. HE WISHED ME JOY—AND HE DOES WISH

ME JOY TOO. I'VE NO RIGHT TO TALK TO YOU. TO TELL YOU. OR ANYTHING, I DON'T

BELIEVE PEOPLE THINK GIRLS EVER MIND MAKING MEN UNHAPPY: BUT THEY do."

Iver was sensible and not given to silly tears.

"IF THEY LIKE THE MEN?" THIS SUGGESTION AT LEAST WAS NOT TOO DIFFICULT FOR him.

"YES, WHEN THEY LIKE THEM, WHEN THEY'RE OLD FRIBNDS, YOU KNOW. I ONLY SPOKE TO HIM FOR A MOMENT, I ONLY JUST MET HIM ON THE ROAD. I DON'T SUPPOSE I SHALL EVER TALK TO HIM ABOUT IT, OR ABOUT ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR, AGAIN." SHE SQUEEZED NEELD'S HAND A SECOND TIME, AND then withdrew her own.

THIS WAS UNKNOWN COUNTRY AGAIN FOR MR NEELD; HIS SENSE OF BEING LOST GREW MORE ACUTE. THESE WERE NOT THE SORT OF PROBLEMS WHICH HAD COCUPED HIS LIFE, BUT THEY SEEMED NOW TO HIM NO LESS REAL, HARDLY LESS IMPORTANT. IT WAS ONLY A GREW MONTERING IF SHE HAD DONE RIGHT. YET HE RIT.

"YOU CAN'T HELP THE UNHAPPINESS," HE SAID. "YOU MUST GO TO THE MAN you love, my dear."

WITH A LITTLE START SHE TURNED AND LOOKED AT HIM FOR AN INSTANT. THEN SHE

the importance of it.

murmured in a perfunctory fashion:
"Yes, I Must Make the Best Choice I Can, OF Course." She added after
a pause, "But I wish......."

Words or the inclination to speak failed her again, and she relapsed into silence.

As he sat there beside her, silent too, his mind travelled back to what

As HE SAT THERE BESIDE HER, SILENT TOO, HIS MIND TRAVELLED BACK TO WHAT HER FATHER HAD SAID; AND SLOWLY HE BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND. NO DOUBT SHE LIKED HARRY, EVEN AS HER FATHER DID. NO DOUBT SHE THOUGHT HE WOULD BE a good husband, as Iver had thought him a good fellow. But it became

a good nusband, as iver had thought him a good leilow. But it becam PLAIN TO THE SEARCHER AFTER TRUTH THAT NOT TO HER ANY MORE THAN TO HER FATHER WAS IT NOTHING THAT HARRY WAS TRISTRAM OF BLENT. HER PHRASES

ABOUT DONG RIGHT AND MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE INCLUDED A REPERBNOE TO THAT, EVEN IF THAT WERE NOT THEIR WHOLE MEANING. SHE HAD MENTIONED HER FATHER'S PLEASURE—EVERYBOOD'S PLEASURE. THAT PLEASURE WOLLD BE

TO SAY ON THE QUESTION THAT SO PERPLEXED MR NEELD? WOLLD SHE NOT ECHO IVER'S ACCUSATION OF FRAUD AGAINST HARRY TRISTRAM AND (AS A CONSEQUENCE) AGAINST THOSE WHO AIDED AND ABETTED HIM? WOULD SHE LINDERSTAND OR ACCEPT AS AN EXCLISE THE PLEA THAT NEED HAD BEEN LED AWAY BY ROMANCE OR ENTRAPPED INTO A CONSPIRACY BY MINA ZABRISKA? No. She too would call out "Fraud, fraud!" and he did not blame her. HE CALLED HIMSELF A FOOL FOR HAVING BEEN LED AWAY BY ROWANCE, BY LINREASONING FFFF ING. SHOULD HE BLAME HER BECAUSE SHE WAS NOT LED AWAY? HIS DISPOSITION WAS TO PRAISE HER FOR A CHOICE SO WISE. AND TO THINK THAT SHE HAD DONE VERY RIGHT IN ACCEPTING LORD TRISTRAM OF BLENT. AYE, LORD TRISTRAM OF BLENT! PRECISELY! DEEP DESPAIR SETTLED ON MR Neeld's baffled mind. MEANWHILE DUPLAY WALKED HOVE. THE HAPPIER FOR HAVING CROSSED HIS RUBICON HE HAD OPENED HIS CAMPAIGN WITH ALL THE SUCCESS HE COLLD. HAVE EXPECTED. LIKE A WISE MAN, IVER HELD NOTHING TRUE TILL IT WAS PROVED: BUT LIKE A WISE MAN ALSO HE DUBBED NOTHING A LIE MERELY because it was new or improbable. And on the whole he had done the Major justice. He had smiled for a moment when he hinted that Duplay AND HARRY WERE NOT VERY CORDIAL; THE MAJOR MET HIM BY A STRAIGHTFORWARD RECOGNITION THAT THIS WAS TRUE. AND BY AN INDIRECT ADMISSION OF THE REASON. AS TO THIS LATTER IVER HAD DROPPED NO WORD: BUT HE WOULD GIVE DUPLAY A HEARING. NOW IT REMAINED ONLY TO BRING MINA TO REASON. IF SHE SPOKE, THE CASE WOULD BE SO STRONG AS TO DEMAND INCURY. THE RELIEF IN DUPLAY'S MIND WAS SO GREAT THAT HE COULD NOT EXPLAIN IT. UNTIL HE REALIZED THAT HIS NIECE'S WAY OF TREATING HIM HAD SO STUCK IN HIS MEMORY THAT HE HAD BEEN PREPARED TO BE TURNED FROM IVER'S DOORS WITH CONTUNELY, SUCH AN IDEA SEEMED ABSURD now, and the Major laughed. Mina was strange, Duplay never ceased to think that. They had parted ON IMPOSSIBLE TERMS; BUT NOW, AS SOON AS HE APPEARED, SHE RAN AT

HIM WITH APPARENT PLEASURE AND WITH THE UTMOST EAGERNESS. SHE

FOUND LARGELY IN SEEING HER LADY TRISTRAM. WHAT THEN WOULD SHE HAVE

danced as she cried: "I'VE SEEN HER! I'VE BEEN TALKING TO HER! I MET HER IN THE MEADOW NEAR MATSON'S COTTAGE, AND SHE ASKED ME THE WAY BACK TO BLENT, UNCLE. she's wonderfull"

ASKED NOTHING ABOUT HIS EXPEDITION FITHER. THOUGH SHE COULD FASILY HAVE GLESSED WHERE HE HAD BEEN AND FOR WHAT PLIRPOSE. SHE ALMOST

"Who are you talking about?" "Why. Ceally Gainsborough, of course, Lijust reviewber how Lady TRISTRAM SPOKE. SHE SPEAKS THE SAME WAY EXACTLY! I CAN'T DESCRIBE IT.

BUT IT'S THE SORT OF VOICE THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO DO ANYTHING IN THE WORLD IT ASKS. DON'T YOU KNOW? SHE TOLD ME A LOT ABOUT HERSELF: THEN SHE TALKED ABOUT BLENT. SHE'S FULL OF IT: SHE ADMRES IT MOST tremendously----"

"THAT'S ALL RIGHT." INTERRUPTED DUPLAY WITH A MALICIOUS SMILE. "BECAUSE. so far as I can understand, she happens to own it." "What?" The Imp stood frozen into stillness.

"YOU'VE BEEN TALKING TO LADY TRISTRAM OF BLENT." HE ADDED WITH A NOD. "Though I suppose you didn't tell her so?"

To Lady Tristram of Blent! She had never once thought of that while they talked. The shock of the idea was great, so great that Mina forgot TO REPUDIATE IT. OR TO SHOW ANY INDIGNATION AT HARRY'S CLAIMS BEING PASSED BY IN CONTEMPTUOUS SILENCE, ALL THE WHILE THEY TALKED, SHE HAD

THOUGHT OF THE GIRL AS FAR REMOVED FROM BLENT, AS EVEN MORE OF A VISITOR to the countryside than she herself was, a wonderful visitor indeed, but NO PART OF THEIR LIFE. AND SHE WAS—WELL. AT THE LEAST SHE WAS HEIR TO

BLENT HOW HAD SHE FORCOTTEN THAT? THE PERSISTENT TRIUMEN OF DURI AY'S smile marked his sense of the success of his sally.

"YES. AND SHE'LL BE INSTALLED THERE BEFORE MANY MONTHS ARE OUT." HE

went on, "So I hope you made yourself pleasant, Mina?" Mina gave him one scornful glance, as she passed by him and ran out ON TO HER FAVORITE TERRACE. THERE WAS A NEW THING TO LOOK AND TO WONDER AT IN BLENT. THE INTEREST, THE SENSE OF CONCERN IN BLENT AND ITS AFFAIRS. WHICH THE NEWS OF THE BYGAGEMENT HAD BLUNTED AND ALMOST DESTROYED, REVIVED IN HER NOW, SHE FORGOT THE PROSE OF THAT MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENT AND TURNED FAGERIY TO THE POETRY OF CECLY GAINSBOROUGH, OF THE POOR GIRL THERE IN THE HOUSE THAT WAS HERS. UNWITTING GUEST OF THE MAN WHO WAS ---- THE IMP STOPPED HERSELF WITH RUDE ABRUPTNESS. WHAT HAD SHE BEEN ABOUT TO SAY, WHAT HAD SHE been about to think? The guest of the man who was robbing her? That HAD BEEN IT. BUT NO, NO, NO! SHE DID NOT THINK THAT. CONFUSED IN HER MIND BY THIS NEW IDEA. NONE THE LESS SHE FOUND HER SYMPATHY GOING OUT TO HARRY AGAIN. HE WAS NOT A ROBBER: IT WAS HIS OWN. THE BLOOD. SHE CRIED STILL. AND NOT THE LAW. BUT WHAT WAS TO BE DONE ABOUT CECLY GAINSBOROUGH? WAS SHE TO GO BACK TO THE LITTLE HOUSE IN LONDON, WAS SHE TO GO BACK TO LIGUINESS. TO WORK, TO SHORT COMMONS? THERE SEEMED NO WAY OUT. BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW ATTRACTION. THE OLD ALLEGIANCE AND THE NEW CLAIM TO HOWAGE THAT CECILY MADE. MINA ZABRISKA STOOD BEWILDERED. SHE HAD A TASTE NOW OF THE SAME PERPLEXITY THAT SHE HAD DONE SO MUCH TO BRING ON POOR MR NEELD AT FAIRHOLME. YET NOT QUITE THE SAME. HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT HE QUIGHT TO DO: SHE DID NOT FEEL SURE OF WHAT SHE WANTED. BOTH STOOD UNDECIDED. MR CHOLDERTON'S JOURNAL WAS STILL AT ITS WORK OF DISTURBING PEOPLE'S minds. But Major Duplay was well content with the day's work. If his niece had A DIVIDED MIND SHE WOULD BE FASIER TO BEND TO HIS WILL. HE DID NOT CARE WHO HAD BLENT. IF ONLY IT PASSED FROM HARRY. BUT IT WAS A POINT GAINED IF MINA COULD THINK OF ITS PASSING FROM HARRY TO SOMEBODY WHO WOULD BE WELCOME TO HER THERE. THEN SHE WOULD TELL THE STORY WHICH SHE HAD RECEIVED FROM HER MOTHER, AND THE FIRST BATTLE AGAINST HARRY TRISTRAM WOULD BE WON. THE EXCITEMENT OF FIGHTING WAS ON THE MAJOR.

NOW. HE COULD NETHER PITY THE BNEWY NOR DISTRUST HIS OWN CAUSE TILL THE strife was done. AMONGST ALL THE INDEOSION THERE WAS ABOUT, DUPLAY HAD THE MERIT OF A clear vision of his own purpose and his own desires.

XIII

In the Long Gallery

THE MAN WITH WHOM THE FIGHTERS AND THE DOUBTERS WERE CONCERNED. IN WHOSE DEFENCE OR ATTACK EFFORTS AND HOPES WERE BILISTED. ROUND WHOM HESITATION AND STRUGGLES GATHERED. WAS THINKING VERY LITTLE ABOUT HIS CHAMPIONS OR HIS ENEMIES. NO FRESH WHISPERS OF DANGER HAD COME TO HARRY TRISTRAM'S EARS. HE KNEW NOTHING OF NEELD AND COULD NOT THINK OF THAT QUIFT OLD GENTLEWAN AS A POSSIBLE MENACE TO HIS SECRET. HE TRUSTED MINA ZABRISKA AND RELIED ON THE INFLUENCE WHICH HE HAD PROVED HIMSELE TO POSSESS OVER HER. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT DUPLAY WOULD STICK TO HIS GAME, AND WAS NOT AFRAID OF HIM IF HE DID. THE BYGAGEMENT WAS ACCOMPLISHED: THE BIG CHECK, OR THE PROSPECT. OF IT. LAY READY TO HIS HAND: HIS FORMAL PROOFS. PERFECT SO LONG AS THEY WERE UNASSAULED, AWAITED THE HOUR WHEN FORMAL PROCES WOULD BE REQUIRED. TO ALL APPEARANCE HE WAS SECURE IN HIS INHERITANCE AND BUTTRESSED AGAINST ANY PERIL. NO VOICE WAS RAISED. NO MURMUR WAS HEARD, TO IMPUGN THE RIGHT OF THE NEW LORD TRISTRAM OF BLENT, THE OBJECT OF ALL THOSE LONG PREPARATIONS. WHICH HAD OCCUPIED HIS MOTHER AND HIMSELF FOR SO MANY YEARS, WAS ACHEVED. HE SAT IN ADDIE Tristram's place, and none said him nav.

HIS MIND WAS NOT MUCH ON THESE MATTERS AT ALL. EVEN HIS BNGAGEMENT OCCUPIED HIM VERY LITTLE. JAME'S LETTER HAD ARRIVED AND HAD BEEN READ. IT CAME AT MID-DAY, AND THE EVENING FOUND IT STILL UNACKNOWLEDGED. In had broken in from outside as it were, intruding like something foreign INTO THE LIFE THAT HE HAD BEGUN TO LIVE ON THE EVENING BEFORE ADDIE TRISTRAM WAS BURIED, THE EVENING WHEN FOR AN INSTANT HE HAD THOUGHT

MOOD WHICH MINA HAD NOTICED IN HIM WHILE LADY TRISTRAM STILL LIVED BUT BROUGHT INTO REALITY BY THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER. IT SEEMED A NEW LIFE COMING TO ONE WHO WAS ALMOST A NEW MAN. SO MUCH OF THE UNEXPECTED IN HIM DID IT REVEAL TO HIMSELE. HE HAD STRUGGLED AGAINST IT. saving that the Monday morning would see an end of this unlooked-for EPISODE OF FEELING AND OF COMPANIONSHIP. ACCIDENT STEPPED IN: GAINSBOROUGH LAY IN BED WITH A CHILL AND COULD NOT MOVE. HARRY ACQUIESCED IN THE NECESSITY OF HIS REWAINING, NOT EXACTLY WITH PLEASURE, RATHER WITH A SENSE THAT SOMETHING HAD BEGUN TO HAPPEN. NOT BY HIS WILL, BUT AFFECTING HIM DEEPLY. WHAT WOULD COME OF IT HE DID NOT KNOW: THAT IT WOULD END IN A DAY OR TWO. THAT IT WOULD BE ONLY AN EPISODE AND LEAVE NO PERMANENT MARK SEEMED NOW ALMOST impossible: it was fraught with something bigger than that. BUT WITH WHAT? HE HAD NO REASONED IDEA: HE WAS UNABLE TO REASON.

HE SAW HER PHANTOM BY THE POOL: A LIFE FORESHADOWED BY THE NEW

HE WAS PASSIVE IN THE HANDS OF THE FEELINGS. THE IMPRESSIONS. THE FANCIES THAT LAID HOLD OF HIM. ADDIE TRISTRAM'S DEATH HAD MOVED HIM STRANGELY: THEN CAME THAT HARDLY NATURAL. EERLY FASCINATING REMINISCENCE—NO. IT WAS MORE THAN THAT—THAT RE-EMBODIMENT OR

RESURRECTION OF HER IN THE GIRL WHO MOVED AND TALKED AND SAT LIKE HER. WHO HAD HER WAYS THOUGH NOT HER FACE. HER EYES SET IN ANOTHER FRAME. HER VOICE RENEWED IN YOUTHFUL RICHNESS. THE VERY TURNS OF HER HEAD. EVEN HER OLD TRICK OF STICKING OUT HER FOOT. HE SCOWLED SOMETIMES. HE

WAS SURPRISED INTO LAUGHTER SOMETIMES: AT ANOTHER MOMENT HE WOULD REBEL AGAINST THE MALICIOUS POWER THAT SEEMED TO BE HAVING A JOKE

WITH HIM: FOR THE MOST PART HE LOOKED. AND LOOKED. AND LOOKED. LINWILLING TO MISS A SINGLE ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTIC TOLICHES WHICH HAD

BEEN ADDIE TRISTRAM'S BELONGINGS AND WHICH HE HAD NEVER EXPECTED.

TO SEE AGAIN AFTER HER SPIRIT HAD PASSED AWAY. AND THE OUTCOME OF ALL

HIS LOOKING WAS STILL THE SAME AS THE EFFECT OF HIS FIRST IMPRESSION ON THE EVENING BEFORE THE FUNERAL—A SORT OF DESPAIR. A THING WAS THERE

which he did not know how to deal with.

AND SHE WAS SO HAPPY. SO ABSURDLY HAPPY. SHE HAD SOON FOUND THAT HE EXPECTED NO CONVENTIONAL SOLEWNITY: HE LAUGHED HIMSELF AT THE IDEA OF ADDIE TRISTRAM WANTING PEOPLE TO PULL LONG FACES. AND KEEP THEM LONG WHEN PULLED. BECAUSE SHE HAD LAID HER BURDEN DOWN AND WAS AT PEACE. CECILY FOUND SHE MIGHT BE MERRY. AND MERRY SHE WAS. A NEW LIFE HAD COME TO HER TOO. A LIFE OF RIVER AND TREES AND MEADOWS: DEEPER THAN THAT, A LIFE OF BEAUTY ABOUT HER. SHE ABSORBED IT WITH A NATIVE THRST. THERE WAS PLENTY OF IT. AND SHE HAD BEEN STARVED SO LONG. SHE SEZED ON BLENT AND BNIOYED IT TO THE FULL. SHE ENJOYED HARRY TOO. LAUGHING NOW WHEN HE STARED AT HER AND MAKING HIM LAUGH, YET HERSELF NOTING ALL HIS WAYS. HIS PRIDE HIS LITTLE LORDLINESSES.—THESE GREW DEAR TO HER-HIS AIR OF OWNING THE COUNTRYSIDE. AND MAKING NO SECRET OF HER OWN PLEASURE IN BEING PART OF THE FAMILY AND IN LIVING IN THE HOUSE THAT OWNED THE COUNTRYSIDE. IT IS TO BE FEARED THAT MR GAINSBOROUGH AND HIS CHILL WERE RATHER NEGLECTED. BUT HE GOT ON VERY WELL WITH ADDIE TRISTRAM'S ANCIENT MAID: SHE HAD THE NOBILITY AT HER FINGERS' ENDS AND EVEN KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR PEDIGREES. CEOLY WAS FREE, OR ASSUMED THE ERRETTOM TO SPEND HER TIME WITH HARRY, OR IE HE FAILED. HER. AT LEAST WITH AND AMONG THE THINGS THAT BELONGED TO HIM AND HAD BELONGED TO BEAUTIFUL ADDIE TRISTRAM WHO HAD BEEN LIKE HER-SO HARRY SAID, AND CECILY TREASURED. THE THOUGHT, TEASING HIM NOW SOMETIMES. AS THEY GREW INTIMATE, WITH A PURPOSED REPETITION OF A POSE OR TRICK THAT SHE HAD FIRST DISPLAYED UNCONSCIOUSLY. AND FOUND HAD POWER TO MAKE HIM FROWN OR SMILE. SHE SMILED HERSELF IN MISCHEVOUS TRIUMPH WHEN SHE HIT HER MARK. OR SHE WOULD BREAK INTO THE RICH GURGLE OF DELIGHT THAT HE REMEMBERED HEARING FROM HIS YOUNG MOTHER WHEN HE HIMSELF WAS A CHILD. THE LIFE WAS TO HER ALL PURE DELIGHT: SHE HAD NO SHARE IN THE THOUGHTS THAT OFTEN DARKENED HIS BROW, NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE THING WHICH AGAIN AND AGAIN FILLED HIM WITH that wondering despair. On the evening of the day when Major Duplay went to Fairholme, the TWO SAT TOGETHER IN THE GARDEN AFTER DINNER. IT WAS NINE O'CLOCK, A CLOSE STILL NIGHT, WITH DARK CLOUDS NOW AND THEN SLOWLY MOVING OFF AND ON TO

THE FACE OF A MOON NEARLY FULL. THEY HAD BEEN SILENT FOR SOME MINUTES. SIPPING COFFEE. CECLY POINTED TO THE ROW OF WINDOWS IN THE LEFT WING OF the house. "I've never been there." she said. "What's that?"

"The Long Gallery—all one long room, you know," he answered. "One room! All that! What's in it?"

"WELL, EVERYTHING MOSTLY," HE SMLED, "ALL OUR TREASURES, AND OUR

"Why haven't you taken me there?"

pictures, and so on."

weak.

Harry shrugged his shoulders. "You never asked me," he said. "Well, will you take me there now—when you've finished your cigar?"

THERE WAS A PAUSE BEFORE HE ANSWERED. "YES, IF YOU LIKE." HE TURNED TO THE SERVANT WHO HAD COME TO TAKE AWAY THE COFFEE. "LIGHT UP THE Long Gallery at once."

"YES. MY LORD." A SLIGHT SURPRISE BROKE THROUGH THE RESPECTFUL

acceptance of the order. "IT WAS LIGHTED LAST FOR MY MOTHER. MONTHS AGO." HARRY SAID. AS THOUGH HE WERE EXPLAINING HIS SERVANT'S SURPRISE. "SHE SAT THERE THE LAST

evening before she took to her room."

"No. I DON'T KNOW THAT I DO." BUT HIS RELUCTANCE SEEMED VAGUE AND

"I expect it is." His tone was not very confident.

"And you don't much want to now?"

"Is that why you haven't taken me there?"

"Oh. I Must Go." Cealy decided. "But you needn't come unless you like, you know," "All right, you go alone," he agreed. WINDOW AFTER WINDOW SPRANG INTO LIGHT "AH!" MURMURED CECILY IN SATISFACTION: AND MINA ZABRISKA SAW THE ILLUMNATION FROM THE TERRACE OF MERRION ON THE HILL. CECILY ROSE, WAVED HER HAND TO HARRY, AND RAN OFF INTO THE HOUSE WITH A LAUGH. THE NEXT MOMENT HE SAW HER FIGURE IN THE FIRST WINDOW: SHE THREW IT OPEN, WAVED HER HAND AGAIN, AND AGAIN LAUGHED: THE MOON, CLEAR FOR A MOMENT, SHONE ON HER FACE AND TURNED

it pale. HE SAT WATCHING THE LIGHTED WINDOWS. FROM TIME TO TIME SHE DARTED. INTO SIGHT: ONCE HE HEARD THE BIG WINDOW AT THE BND FACING THE RIVER FLUNG OPEN. THE NEXT INSTANT SHE WAS IN SIGHT AT THE OTHER EXTREMITY OF

THE GALLERY. EVIDENTLY SHE WAS RUNNING ABOUT, EXAMINING ALL THE THINGS. SHE CAME TO A WINDOW PRESENTLY AND CRIED. "I WISH YOU'D COME AND TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT." "I DON'T THINK I WILL," HE CALLED BACK. "OH, WELL ----!" SHE LAUGHED IMPATIENTLY. AND DISAPPEARED. MINUTES PASSED AND HE DID NOT SEE HER AGAIN: SHE MUST HAVE SETTLED DOWN SOMEWHERE. HE

SUPPOSED: OR PERHAPS HER INTEREST WAS EXHAUSTED AND SHE HAD GONE OFF TO HER FATHER'S ROOM. NO. THERE SHE WAS, FLITTING PAST A WINDOW AGAIN. HIS RELUCTANCE GAVE WAY BEFORE CURIOSITY AND ATTRACTION. Flinging away his cigar, he got up and walked slowly into the house.

THE PASSAGE OUTSIDE THE GALLERY WAS DIMLY LIGHTED, AND THE DOOR OF THE GALLERY WAS OPEN. HARRY STOOD IN THE SHADOW UNSEEN, WATCHING INTENTLY EVERY MOVEMENT OF THE GIRL'S. SHE WAS LOOKING AT A CASE OF

MINATURES AND MEDALS. MEMORIALS OF BEAUTIES AND OF WARRIORS. SHE

TURNED FROM THEM TO THE PICTURE OF AN ELIZABETHAN COUNTESS. SPLENDID IN RUFF AND RICH IN EMBROIDERY. SHE CAUGHT UP A CANDLE AND HELD IT OVER

HER HEAD. UP TOWARD THE PICTURE. THEN SETTING THE CANDLE DOWN SHE RAN.

TO THE END WINDOW AND LOOKED OUT ON THE NIGHT. ADDIE TRISTRAMS TALL ARW-CHAIR STILL STOOD BY THE WINDOW, CECILY THREW HERSELF INTO IT. SIGHING SLOWLY AND IRRESOLUTELY HARRY TRISTRAM CAME IN; CEOLY'S FACE WAS NOT TURNED TOWARD THE DOOR, AND HE STOOD UNNOTICED JUST WITHIN THE THRESHOLD. HIS EYES RANGED ROUND THE ROOM BUT CAME BACK TO CEOLY.

SHE WAS VERY QUIET, BUT HE SAW HER BREAST RISE AND FALL IN QUICK BREATHING. SHE WAS STIRRED AND MOVED. A STRANGE AGITATION, AN INTENSITY OF FEELING. CAME OVER HIM AS HE STOOD THERE MOTIONLESS.

AND STRETCHING HER ARMS IN A DELIGHTED WEARINESS. MINA ZABRISKA

EVERYTHING SEEMING MOTIONLESS AROUND HIM, WHILE HIS ANCESTORS AND HERS LOOKED DOWN ON THEM FROM THE WALLS, DOWN ON THEIR SUCCESSORS.
THE LORDS OF BLENT WERE ABOUT HIM. THEIR TROTHES AND THEIR TREASURES DECKED THE ROOM. AND SHE SAT THERE IN ADDIE TRISTRAMS CHAIR. IN

could make out a figure in the Long Gallery now.

ADDIE TRISTRAMS PLACE, IN ADDIE TRISTRAMS ATTITUDE. DID THE DEAD know the secret? Did the pictures share it? Who was to them the Lord of Blent?

HE SHOOK OFE THESE IDLE FANCIES—A MAN SHOULD NOT GIVE WAY TO THEM.

—AND WALKED UP THE ROOM WITH A STEADY ASSURED TREAD. EVEN THEN she did not seem to hear him till he spoke.

"WELL, DO YOU LIKE IT?" HE ASKED, LEANING AGAINST A TABLE IN THE MODLE OF THE UPPER PART OF THE ROOM, A FEW FRET FROM THE CHAIR WHERE SHE SAT.

AGAINST THE DARKNESS, AND WATCHED THEM WITH AN EAGERNESS THAT HAD no reason in it.

"Like IT!" SHE CRIED, SPRINGING TO HER FEET, RUNNING TO HIM, HOLDING OUT

NOW MINA ZABRISKA MADE OUT TWO FIGURES. CAST UP BY THE BRIGHT LIGHT

HER HANDS. "LIKE IT! OH, HARRY! WHY, IT'S BETTER THAN ALL THE REST. BETTER, even better!"
"It'S RATHER A JOLLY ROOM." SAID HARRY. "THE RICTURES AND ALL THE THINGS

TIS KAIHER A JOLLY ROUM, SAID FIARRY. THE HICTURES AND ALL THE THINGS about make it look well."

"OH. I'M NOT GOING TO SAY ANYTHING IF YOU TALK LIKE THAT. YOU DON'T FEEL.

"Shall we call it a temple?" he suggested, smiling. "I BELIEVE IT'S HEAVEN—THE PRIVATE PARTICULAR TRISTRAM HEAVEN. THEY'RE ALL HERE!" SHE WAVED TOWARD THE PICTURES. "HERE IN A HEAVEN OF THER own" "And we're allowed to visit it before we die?" "YES. AT LEAST I AM. YOU LET ME VISIT IT. IT BELONGS TO YOU—TO THE DEAD and vou." "Do you want to stay here any longer?" HE ASKED WITH A SUDDEN. roughness.

LIKE THAT!—'RATHER A LICILLY ROOM!' THAT'S WHAT ONE SAYS IF THE INN PARI OR'S.

comfortable. This isn't a room. It's—it's——"

NEEDN'T. THOUGH. YOU'LL HAVE IT ALL YOUR LIFE. PERHAPS I SHALL NEVER HAVE IT AGAIN. FATHER'S BETTER! AND I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'LL EVER ASK US HERE again. You never did before, you know. So I mean to have all of it I can GET." SHE DARTED AWAY FROM HIM AND RAN BACK TO THE MINATURES. A RICHLY ORNAMENTED SWORD HUNG ON THE WALL JUST ABOVE THEM. THIS

"YES, LOTS LONGER" SHE LAUGHED DEFIANTLY, QUITE UNDISMAYED, "YOU

caught her notice: she took it down and unsheathed it. "Henricus Baro Tristram de Blent." SHE SPELT OUT FROM THE ENAMELED. steel, "Per Ensem Justitia. What DOES THAT MEAN? NO. I KNOW, RATHER

A GOOD MOTTO, COUSIN HARRY, 'THAT HE SHALL TAKE WHO HAS THE POWER. and he shall keep who can!' That was his justice, I expect!"

"Do you guarrel with it? If this was all yours, would you give it up?" "NOT WITHOUT A FIGHT!" SHE LAUGHED. " Per Ensem Justitia!" SHE WAVED.

the blade. HARRY LEFT HER RUSY WITH THE THINGS THAT WERE SO GREAT A DELICHT AND

WALKED TO THE WINDOW AT THE OTHER END OF THE LONG ROOM. THENCE HE

AND OF THE AGITATION IN WHICH HE HAD BEEN LIVING. IT WAS NOTHING TO DEFY THE LAW, TO MAKE LIGHT OF A DRY ABSTRACTION, TO FIND RIGHT AGAINST IT IN HIS BLOOD. HIS OPPONENT NOW WAS NO MORE THE LAW, IT WAS NO MORE EVEN SOME TIRESOME, UNKNOWN, UNREALIZED GIRL IN LONDON, WITH SURROUNDINGS MOST UNFICTURESQUE AND ASSOCIATIONS THAT HAD NO POWER TO TOUCH HIS HEART. HERE WAS THE BREW, THIS CREATURE WHOSE EVERY MOVEWENT CLAIMED THE BLOOD THAT WAS HERS, WHOSE COMING REPAIRED THE LOSS BIENT HAD SUffered in losing Addie Tristram, whose presence crowned ITS CHARWS WITH A NEW GLORY. NATURE THAT FASHONED HER IN THE TRISTRAM IMAGE—HAD IT NOT PUT IN HER HAND THE SWORD BY WHICH SHE SHOULD WIN JUSTICE? THE THOUGHT PASSED THROUGH HIS MIND NOW WITHOUT A SHOOK; HE seemed to see her mistress of Blent; for the moment he forgot himself as anyone save an onlooker: he did not seem concerned.

WATCHED, NOW HER, NOW THE CLOUDS THAT LOUNGED OFF AND ON TO THE MOON'S DISK. MORE AND MORE, THOUGH, HIS EYES WERE CAUGHT BY HER AND GLUED TO HER, SHE WAS THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM, IT SEEMED ALL MADE AND REPRANED FOR HER EVEN AS IT HOS SEEMED FOR ADDIE TRISTRAM. THE MOTTO RAN IN HIS HEAD—

Per Ensem Justitia. What was THE JUSTICE AND WHAT THE SWORT? HE ANDKE TO THE CAUGE OF THE CHANGED MOOD IN HIM

"Are you still there?" She cried back in a gay affectation of surprise.
"To porgotten all about you, I thought I had it to myself. I was trying to think it was all mine."

Once more he roused himself. He had fallen into a fear of the fancies that threatened to carry him he did not know where. He wanted to get away from this room with its suggestions, and from the presence that

"Aren't you ready yet?" he called to her. "It's getting late."

gave them such force.

"Shall we go downstairs?" His voice was hard and constrained.

"No, I won't," she said squarely. "I can't go. It's barely ten o'clock. Come we'll talk here. You smoke—or is that high treason?—and I'll HER, OF HER SENSE OF THE BOUNDLESS SATISFACTION THAT HER SURROUNDINGS
GAVE. "I LOVE IT ALL SO MUCH," SHE MURWURED, HALF PERHAPS TO HERSELF, YET
STILL AS A PLEA TO HIM THAT HE WOULD NOT SEEK TO HURRY HER FROM THE
place.

SIT HERE." SHE THREW HERSELF INTO ADDIE TRISTRAMS GREAT CHAIR. THERE WAS A TRILIMEHANT GAYETY IN HER AIR THAT SPOKE OF HER JOY IN ALL AROUT.

Place.

HARRY TURNED AWAY, AGAIN WITH THAT DESPAIR ON HIM. SHE GAVE HIM
PERMISSION TO GO, BUT HE COULD NOT LEAVE HER.—NETHER HER NOR NOW THE
ROOM. YET HE WAS ARRAD THAT HE COULD NOT ANSWER FOR HIMSELF IF HE
STAYED. IT WAS TOO STRANGE THAT EVERY ASSOCIATION, AND EVERY TRADITION,
AND EVERY BNOTION WHICH HAD THROUGH ALL THE YEARS SEEMED TO JUSTIFY
AND EVERY TO SANCTIFY HIS OWN POSITION AND THE MEANS HE WAS TAKING TO

STAYED. IT WAS TOO STRANGE THAT EVERY ASSOCIATION, AND EVERY TRADITION, AND EVERY BYOTION WHICH HAD THROUGH ALL THE YEARS SEEMED TO JUSTIFY AND EVEN TO SANCTIFY HIS OWN POSITION AND THE MEANS HE WAS TAKING TO PRESERVE IT, SHOULD IN TWO OR THREE DAYS BEGIN TO DESERT HIM, AND SHOULD NOW IN THIS HOUR OPENLY RANGE THEMSELVES AGAINST HIM AND ON HER SIDE, SO THAT ALL HE INVOKED TO AID HIM PLEADED FOR HER, ALL THAT HE HAD PRAYED TO BLESS HIM AND HIS ENTERPRISE BLESSED HER AND CURSED the work to which he had put his hand.

WHICH OF THEM COULD BEST FACE THE WORLD WITHOUT BLENT? WHICH OF THEM COULD BEST LOOK THE WORLD IN THE FACE HAVING BLENT? THESE WERE THE

questions that rose in his mind with tempestuous insistence.
"I COULD SIT HERE FOREVER," SHE MURWURED, A LAZY ENLOYMENT SUCCEEDING
TO THE AGLE MOVEMENTS OF HER BODY AND THE DELICHTED AGRICTION OF HER

NERVES. "IT JUST SUITS ME TO SIT HERE, COUSIN HARRY. LOOKING LIKE A GREAT LADY!" HER EYES CHALLENGED HIM TO DENY THAT SHE LOOKED THE PART TO PERFECTION. SHE GLANCED THROUGH THE WINDOW. "I MET THAT FUNNY LITTLE MADAME ZABRISKA WHO LIVES UP AT MERRION LODGE TO-DAY. SHE SEEMS VERY ANXIOUS TO KNOW All about us."

"MADAME ZABRISKA HAS A HEALTHY—OR UNHEALTHY—CURCOSITY." THE MENTION OF MINA WAS A FRESH PRICK. MINA KNEW, SUDDENLY HE HATED THAT SHE SHOULD KNOW.

"Is she in love with you?" ASKED CEOLY, MOCKINGLY YET LANGUIDLY. INDEED AS A GREAT LADY MIGHT INQUIRE ABOUT THE LESS EXALTED. condescending to be amused. "Nobody's in love with me, not even the girl who's going to marry me."

"To marry you?" She sat up, looking at him, "Are you engaged?" "Yes. to Janie Iver. You know who I mean?"

"I ASKED HER A WEEK AGO. TO-DAY SHE WROTE TO SAY SHE'D HAVE ME." HE WAS ON HIS FEET EVEN AS HE SPOKE. "TO MARRY ME AND TO MARRY ALL THIS. vou know."

"Yes, I know. You're going to be married to her?"

She was too sympathetic to waste breath on civil pretences. "To be mistress here? To own this? To be Lady Tristram of Blent?"

"Yes. To have what—what I'm supposed to have." said he.

CECILY REGARDED HIM INTENTLY FOR ANOTHER MOMENT. THEN SHE SANK BACK into Addie Tristram's great arm-chair, asking, "Will she do it well?"

"No," said Harry. "She's a good sort, but she won't do it well." Cecily sighed and turned her head toward the window.

"Why do you do it? Do you care for her?"

"I LIKE HER. AND I WANT MONEY. SHE'S VERY RICH. MONEY MIGHT BE USEFUL to me."

"You seem very rich. Why do you want money?"

"I might want it."

THERE WAS SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. "WELL, I HOPE YOU'LL BE HAPPY," SHE

SHE HERSELF WAS THE REASON—THE BMBODIED REASON (WAS REASON EVER MORE FAIRLY BMBODIED?), WHY HE WAS GOING TO MARRY JANIE IVER. THE MONSTROUSNESS OF IT ROSE BEFORE HIS MIND. WHEN HE TOLD OF HIS BNGAGEMENT, THERE HAD BEEN FOR AN INSTANT A LOOK IN HER EYES. WONDER IT WAS AT LEAST. WAS IT DISAPPOINTMENT? WAS IT AT ALL NEAR TO CONSTERNATION? SHE SAT VERY STILL NOW, HER GAYETY WAS GONE. SHE WAS LIKE ADDIE TRISTRAM STILL, BUT LIKE ADDIE WHEN THE HARD WORLD USED HER ILL. WHEN THERE WERE ACHES TO BE BORNE AND SINS TO BE RECKONED WITH.

As he watched her, yet another new thing came upon him, or a thing that seemed to be as new as the last quarter chimed by the old French Clock on the mantel-pece, and yet mort date back so long as

said presently.

to echo through the room.

THREE DAYS AGO. EVEN NOW IT HARDLY REACHED CONSCIOUSNESS, CERTAINLY DID NOT ATTAIN EXPLICITNESS. IT WAS STILL RATHER THAN JANIE WAS NO MISTRESS FOR BLENT AND THAT THIS GIRL WAS THE IDEAL. IT WAS BLENT STILL RATHER THAN HISBELF, BLENT'S MISTRESS RATHER THAN HIS. BUT IT WAS ENOUGH TO SET A NEW EDGE ON HIS QUESTIONING. WAS HE TO BE THE MAN—HE WHO LOCKED ON HER NOW AND SAW HOW FAIR SHE WAS—WAS HE TO BE THE MAN TO DENY HER HER OWN, TO ROB HER OF HER. RICHT, TO FARADE BEFORE THE WORLD IN THE TRAPPINGS. WHICH WE'VE HERS? IT WAS ALL SO STRANGE, SO OVERWHELMING. HE DROPPED INTO A CHAIR BY HIM AND FRESSED HIS HAND ACROSS HIS BROW. A LOW MURMLE, ALMOST A GROAN, ESCAPED HIM IN THE TIMILT OF HIS SOLL. "MY GOOD!" HE WHISFERED. IN A WHISPER THAT SEEMED.

DON'T UNDERSTAND. YOU TELL ME YOU'RE ENGAGED, AND YOU LOOK SO UNHAPPY. WHY DO YOU MARRY HER IF YOU DON'T LOVE HER? ARE YOU GIVING HER ALL THIS—AND YOURSELF—YOU YOURSELF—WITHOUT LOVING HER? DEAR HARRY—ves. you've been very good to me—dear Harry. why?"

"HARRY! ARE YOU UNHAPPY?" IN AN INSTANT SHE WAS BY HIM. "WHAT IS IT? I

"Go back," he said. "Go back to your chair. Go and sit there."

WITH WONDER IN HER EYES AND A SMILE EYESHEDEN ON HER LIPS SHE

"I'M MARRYING HER FOR BLENT'S SAKE—AND I THINK SHE'S MARRYING ME FOR Blent's sake."

"I call that horrible."

"No." HE SPRANG TO HS FEET. "IF BLENT WAS YOURS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO keep it?"

"Everything," she answered. "Everything—except sell myself, Harry."

"Well?" she said. "You're very odd. But-why?"

obeved him.

face.

ON THE BEND OF THE ARM, THERE WAS THE DAINTY FOOT STUCK OUT. THERE WAS ALL THE DEFIANCE OF A WORLD INSENSATE TO LOVE, GREEDY TO FIND SIN, DULL TO SEE GRACE AND BEAUTY, BLIND TO A WOMAN'S SELF WHILE IT CAVILLED AT A WOMAN'S deeds.

"EVERYTHING EXCEPT SELL YOURSELF?" HE REPEATED. HIS EYES SET ON HER

SHE WAS SUPERB. BY A NATURAL INSTINCT, ALL AFFECTATION FORGOTTEN, SHE HAD THROWN HERSELF INTO ADDIE TRISTRAM'S ATTITUDE. THERE WAS THE HEAD

"Yes—*Per Ensem Justitia!*" she laughed. "But not lies, and not buying and selling, Harry."

"Mv word is given. I must marry her now."

"Better fling Blent away!" she flashed out in a brilliant indignation.

"And if I did that?"

"A WOMAN WOULD LOVE YOU FOR YOURSELF," SHE ORIED, LEANING FORWARD TO him with hands clasped.

AGAIN HE ROSE AND PACED THE LENGTH OF THE LONG GALLERY. THE MOMENT WAS COME. THERE WAS A GREAT ALLIANCE AGAINST HIM. HE FOUGHT STILL. AT AS ITS MASTER FOR THE LAST TIME. YES, IT HAD COME TO THAT. FOR AGAINST ALL, THREATENING TO CONQUER ALL, WAS THE GIRL WHO SAT IN HIS MOTHER'S CHAIR, HER VERY BODY ASSERTING THE CLAIM THAT HER THOUGHTS DID NOT KNOW AND HER MOUTH COULD NOT UTTER. AND YET HIS MOOD HAD AFFECTED HER. THE UPTURNED EYES WERE FULL OF EXCITEMENT, THE PARTIED LIPS WAITED FOR A WORD FROM HIM. MINA ZABRISKA HAD LEFT HER TERRACE AND GONE TO BED, declaring that she was still on Harry's side; but she was not with him in this fight.

EVERY STEP HE TOOK HE CAME TO SOMETHING THAT STILL WAS HIS, THAT HE PRIZED, THAT HE LOVED, THAT MEANT MUCH TO HIM, THAT TYPIFIED HIS POSITION AS TRISTRAM OF BLENT. A SEPARATE PAING WAITED ON EVERY STEP, A GREAT ACONY ROSE IN HIM WITH THE THOUGHT THAT HE MIGHT BE WALKING THIS ROOM.

KEPT HER STILL; SHE WATCHED, SHE WAITED. FOR MINUTES HE WAS SILENT; ALL THOUGHT OF TIME WAS GONE. NOW SHE KNEW THAT HE HAD SOMETHING GREAT TO SAY. WAS IT THAT HE WOULD AND COULD HAVE NO MORE TO DO WITH JANE VER, THAT ANOTHER HAD COME, THAT HS WORD MUST GO, AND THAT HE LOVED

HE RETURNED TO CECLY AND STOOD BY HER. THE SYMPATHY BETWEEN THEM

MER, THAT ANOTHER HAD COME, THAT HIS WORD MUST GO, AND THAT HE LOVED HER? SHE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE THAT. IT WAS SO SHORT A TIME SINCE HE HAD SEEN HER. YET WHY COULD IT NOT BETRUE OF HIM, IF IT WERE TRUE OF HER? AND WAS IT NOT? Else Why did SHE HANG ON HIS WORDS AND KEEP HER EYES ON HIS? ELSE WHY WAS IT SO STILL IN THE ROOM. AS THOUGH THE WORLD TOO

waited for speech from his lips?
"I can't do it!" burst from him suddenly. "By God, I can't do it!"

"I can't do it!" burst from him suddenly. "By God, I can't do it!"
"What, Harry?" The words were no more than breathed. He came

right up to her and caught her by the arm.
"You see all that—everything here? You love it?"

"Yes."

"As Muchas I po? As Muchas I po?" His self-control was cone. She made no answer: she could not understand.

OF THIS. BUT YOU'RE ONE OF US. YOU'RE A TRISTRAM, I DON'T KNOW THE REAL rights of it, but I'll run no risk of cheating a Tristram. You love it all?" "Yes, ves, Harry, But why, dear Harry, why?" "Why? Because it's yours." He let go her hand and reeled back a step. "MINE? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?" SHE CRIED. STILL THE IDEA, THE WILD IDEA, that he offered it with himself was in her mind. "It's yours, not mine—it's never been mine. You're the owner of it. You're Tristram of Blent " "I—I TRISTRAM OF BLENT?" SHE WAS UTTERLY BEWILDERED. FOR HE WAS NOT A lover—no lover ever spoke like that. "YES. I SAY. YES." HIS VOICE ROSE IMPERIOUSLY AS IT PRONOUNCED THE words that threw away his rule. "You're Lady Tristram of Blent." SHE DID NOT UNDERSTAND: YET SHE BELIEVED. HE SPOKE SO THAT HE MUST be believed. "This is all yours—vours—vours. You're Tristram of Blent." She rose to her height, and stood facing him. "And you? And you?" "I? I'm—Harry."

He smiled as he looked at her; as his eves met hers he smiled.

"Yes, you love it," he said, and a smile came on his face. "I'm glad you LOVE IT. As GOD LIVES. UNLESS YOU'D LOVED IT. I'D HAVE SPOKEN NOT A WORD

With an effort he mastered himself.

"Harry? Harry? Harry what?"

Т

XIV

The Very Same Day

"SHALL I WAIT UP, MY LORD? MISS GAINSBOROUGH HAS GONE TO HER ROOM.
I've turned out the lights and shut up the house."

Harry looked at the clock in the study. It was one o'clock.

"I THOUGHT YOU'D GONE TO BED LONG AGO, MASON." HE ROSE AND STRETCHED HIMSELF. "I'M GOING TO TOWN EARLY IN THE MORNING. I SHAN'T WANT ANY BREAKFAST AND I SHAN'T TAKE ANYBODY WITH ME. TELL FISHER TO PACK MY PORTIMANTEAU—THINGS FOR A FEW DAYS—AND SEND IT TO PADDINGTON. I'LL HAVE IT FETCHED FROM THERE. TELL HIM TO BE READY TO FOLLOW ME, IF I SEND for him."

"Yes, my lord."

"GIVE THAT LETTER TO MISS GAINSBOROUGH IN THE MORNING." HE HANDED MASON A THOK LETTER. TWO OTHERS LAY ON THE TABLE. AFTER A MOMENT'S AFFARENT HESITATION HARRY PUT THEM IN HIS POCKET. "I'LL POST THEM myself," he said. "When did Miss Gainsborough go to her room?"

"About an hour back, my lord."

"Did she stay in the Long Gallery till then?"

"Yes, my lord."

"I MAY BE AWAY A LITTLE WHLE, MASON. I HOPE MISS GAINSBOROUGH—AND MR GAINSBOROUGH TOO—WILL BE STAYING ON SOME TIME. MAKE THEM comfortable."

WAS JUST THE SAME AS THOUGH HARRY HAD ORDERED AN EGG FOR BREAKFAST. SUDDEN COM INGS AND GOINGS HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE FASHION OF THE house

NOT A SIGN OF CURIOSITY OR SURPRISE ESCAPED MASON. HIS "YES. MY LORD."

"GOOD-NIGHT, MY LORD." MASON LOOKED ROUND FOR SOMETHING TO CARRY OFF —the force of habit—found nothing, and retired noiselessly. "One o'alook!" sighed Harry, "Ah, I'm tired, I won't go to bed though, I

couldn't sleep."

HE MOVED RESTLESSLY ABOUT THE ROOM. HIS FLOOD OF FEELING HAD GONE BY:

FOR THE TIME THE POWER OF THOUGHT TOO SEEVED TO HAVE DESERTED HIM.

ALL THIS HAD BEEN TWO HOURS' HARD WORK. BUT AFTER ALL TWO HOURS IS NOT LONG TO SPEND IN GETTING RID OF AN OLD LIFE AND ENTERING ON A NEW HE FOUND HIMSELF RATHER SURPRISED AT THE SIMPLICITY OF THE PROCESS. WHAT WAS THERE LEFT TO DO? HE HAD ONLY TO GO TO LONDON AND SEE HIS LAWYER --- AN INTERVIEW EASY ENOUGH FOR HIM. THOUGH STARTLING NO DOUBT TO THE LAWYER. CECLY WOULD BE PUT INTO POSSESSION OF HER OWN. THERE WAS nothing sensational. He would travel a bit perhaps, or just stay in town. HE HAD MONEY ENOUGH TO LIVE ON QUIETLY OR TO USE IN MAKING MORE: FOR HIS MOTHER'S SAVINGS WERE INDUBITABLY HIS. LEFT TO HIM BY A WILL IN WHICH HE, THE REAL HARRY, WAS SO EXPRESSLY DESIGNATED BY HIS OWN FULL NAME -EVEN MORE THAN THAT-AS "HENRY AUSTEN FITZHUBERT TRISTRAM. OTHERWISE HENRY AUSTEN FITZHUBERT, MY SON BY THE LATE CAPTAIN AUSTEN FITZHUBERT"—THAT NO QUESTION OF HIS RIGHT COULD ARISE. THAT MONEY WOULD NOT GO WITH THE TITLE. ONLY BLENT AND ALL THE REALTY PASSED WITH THAT: THE MONEY WAS NOT AFFECTED BY THE DATE OF HIS BIRTH: THAT MUST BE

HE HAD TOLD CEOLY EVERYTHING: HE HAD TOLD JANIE ENOUGH: HE HAD YIELDED TO AN IMPULSE TO WRITE A LINE TO MINA ZABRISKA—BECAUSE SHE HAD BEEN SO MIXED UP IN IT ALL. THE DOCUMENTS THAT WERE TO HAVE proved his claim made a little heap of ashes in the grate.

"All right, Good-night, Mason,"

IT. FOR THE MOMENT THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO BUT TO GO TO LONDON—AND THEN PERHAPS TRAVEL A BIT. HE SMILED FOR AN INSTANT: IT CERTAINLY STRUCK HIM AS RATHER AN ANTI-CLIMAX. HE THREW HIMSELF ON A SOFA AND, IN SPITE of his conviction that he could not sleep, dozed off almost directly. IT WAS THREE WHEN HE AWOKE: HE WENT UP TO HIS ROOM, HAD A BATH, SHAVED, AND PUT ON A TWEED SUIT. COMING DOWN TO THE STUDY AGAIN, HE OPENED THE SHUTTERS AND LOOKED OUT. IT WOULD BE LIGHT SOON, AND HE COULD GO AWAY. HE WAS FRETFULLY IMPATIENT OF STAYING. HE DRANK SOME WHISKEY AND SODA-WATER. AND SMOKED A CIGAR AS HE WALKED UP AND DOWN, YES, THERE WERE SIGNS OF DAWN NOW: THE DARKNESS LIFTED OVER THE hill on which Merrion stood. MERRION! YES, MERRION, AND THE MAJOR? WELL, DUPLAY HAD NOT FRIGHTENED HIM. DUPLAY HAD NOT TURNED HIM OUT. HE WAS GOING OF HIS OWN WILL-OF HIS OWN ACT ANYHOW. FOR HE COULD NOT FEEL SO SURE ABOUT THE WILL. BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME IT STRUCK HIM THAT HIS ABDICATION MIGHT ACCRUE TO THE MAJOR'S BENEFIT. THAT HE HAD WON FOR DUPLAY THE PRIZE WHICH HE WAS SURE THE GALLANT OFFICER COULD NOT HAVE ACHIEVED FOR HIMSBLE, "I'LL BE HANGED IF I DO THAT," HE MUTTERED, "YES, I KNOW WHAT I'LL do." he added, smiling. HE GOT HIS HAT AND STICK AND WENT OUT INTO THE GARDEN. THE WINDOWS OF THE LONG GALLERY WERE ALL DARK. HARRY SMILED AGAIN AND SHOOK HIS FIST. AT THEM. THERE WAS NO LIGHT IN CEQLY'S WINDOW. HE WAS GLAD TO THINK THAT THE GIRL SLEPT: IF HE WERE TIRED SHE MUST BE TERRIBLY TIRED TOO. HE WAS QUITE ALONE—ALONE WITH THE OLD PLACE FOR THE LAST TIME. HE WALKED TO WHERE HE HAD SAT WITH CECILY, WHERE HIS MOTHER USED TO SIT. HE WAS EASY IN HIS MIND ABOUT HIS MOTHER. WHEN SHE HAD WANTED HIM TO KEEP the house and the name, she had no idea of the true state of the case. AND IN FACT SHE HERSELE HAD DONE IT ALL BY REQUESTING HIM TO INVITE THE

GAINSBOROUGHS TO HER FUNERAL. THAT WAS PROOF ENOUGH THAT HE HAD NOT WRONGED HER. IN THE MOOD HE WAS IN IT SEEMED QUITE PROOF ENOUGH.

EXPLAINED TO CECLLY BY HIS LAWYER OR PERHAPS SHE WOULD EXPECT TO GET.

OUTWARD CALMNESS OF MANNER HAD RETURNED. BUT HIS MIND WAS NOT IN A NORMAL STATE. STILL HE WAS AWAKE BNOUGH TO THE EVERY-DAY WORLD AND TO HIS ORDINARY FEELINGS TO REVAIN VERY EAGER THAT HIS SACRIFICE SHOULD NOT turn to the Major's good. HE STARTED AT A BRISK WALK TO THE LITTLE BRIDGE, REACHED THE MIDDLE OF IT. AND STOPPED SHORT. THE TALK HE HAD HAD WITH MINA ZABRISKA AT THIS VERY SPOT CAME BACK INTO HIS MIND. "THE BLOOD, NOT THE LAW!" HE HAD SAID. WELL, IT WAS TO THE BLOOD HE HAD BOWED AND NOT TO THE LAW. HE WAS STRONG ABOUT NOT HAVING BEEN FRIGHTENED BY THE LAW. NOR HAD HE BEEN DISPOSSESSED. HE INSISTED ON THAT TOO. HE HAD GIVEN: HE HAD CHOSEN TO GIVE. HE MADE A MOVEMENT AS THOUGH TO WALK ON, BUT FOR A MOMENT HE COULD NOT. WHEN IT CAME TO GOING, FOR AN INSTANT HE COULD NOT GO. THE PARTING WAS DIFFICULT. HE HAD NO DISCONTENT WITH WHAT HE HAD DONE: ON THE WHOLE IT SEEVED FAR EASIER THAN HE COULD EVER HAVE IMAGINED. BUT IT WAS HARD TO GO. TO LEAVE BLENT JUST AS THE SLOWLY GROWING DAY BROUGHT INTO SIGHT EVERY OUTLINE THAT HE KNEW SO WELL. AND BEGAN TO WARM THE GARDENS INTO LIFE. "I SHOULD RATHER LIKE TO STAY A day." was his thought, as he lingered still. But the next moment he was ACROSS THE BRIDGE. SLAMMING THE GATE BEHIND HIM AND BEGINNING TO MOUNT THE ROAD UP THE VALLEY. HE HAD HEARD A SHUTTER THROWN OPEN AND A WINDOW RAISED: THE SOUND CAME FROM THE WING WHERE CECILY SLEPT. HE DID NOT WANT TO SEE HER NOW: HE DID NOT WISH HER TO SEE HM. SHE WAS TO AWAKE TO UNDIVIDED POSSESSION. FREE FROM ANY RE MINDER OF HIM. THAT WAS HIS FANCY, HIS IDEA OF MAKING HIS GIFT TO HER OF WHAT WAS HERS MORE SPLENDID AND MORE COMPLETE. BUT SHE DID SEE HIM: SHE WATCHED HIM FROM HER WINDOW AS HE WALKED AWAY UP THE VALLEY. HE did not know: true to his fancy, he never turned his head.

REALMES WERE STILL A LITTLE DIM TO HIM. AND FANCIES RATHER REAL. HIS

BOB BROADLEY WAS AN EARLY RISER, AS HIS BUSINESS IN LIFE DEWANDED. AT SIX O'CLOOK HE WAS BREAKFASTING IN A BRIGHT LITTLE ROOM OPENING ON HIS GARDEN. HE WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS RASHER WHEN A SHADOW FELL ACROSS his plate. Looking up, he started to see Harry Tristram at the doorway.

"YOU'VE CALLED ME TRISTRAM ALL YOUR LIFE. I SHOULD THINK YOU MIGHT STILL." observed Harry.

"Lord Tristram!" he exclaimed

"OH ALL RIGHT, BUT WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE? THESE AREN'T GENERALLY YOUR hours, are they?" "Perhaps not, May I have some breakfast?"

The maid was summoned and brought him what he asked. She nearly DROPPED THE CLIP AND SALICER WHEN SHE REALIZED THAT THE GREAT MAN

was there—at six in the morning! "I'M ON MY WAY TO LONDON." SAID HARRY. "GOING TO TAKE THE TRAIN AT FILLINGFORD INSTEAD OF BLENTMOUTH, BECAUSE I WANTED TO DROP IN ON YOU.

I've something to sav." "I EXPECT I'VE HEARD. It'S VERY KIND OF YOU TO COME. BUT I SAW JANE IVER in Blentmouth vesterday." "I dare say: but she didn't tell you what I'm going to."

HARRY, HAVING MADE BUT A PRETENCE OF BREAKFASTING, PUSHED AWAY HIS plate. "I'll smoke if you don't mind. You go on eating." he said. "Do you REMEMBER A LITTLE TALK WE HAD ABOUT OUR FRIEND DURLAY? WE AGREED

that we should both like to put a spoke in his wheel." "AND YOU'VE DONE IT." SAID BOB. REACHING FOR HIS PIPE FROM THE MANTELpiece. "I DID DO IT. I CAN'T DO IT ANY MORE. YOU KNOW THERE WERE CERTAIN

REASONS WHICH MADE A MARRIAGE BETWEEN JANIE IVER AND ME SEEM

DESIRABLE? I'M SAYING NOTHING AGAINST HER, AND I DON'T INTEND TO SAY A

WORD AGAINST MYSELF. WELL, THOSE REASONS NO LONGER EXIST. I HAVE written to her to say so. She'll get that letter this afternoon."

ASKED HER I WAS IN A POSITION TO WHICH I HAD NO ——" HE INTERRUPTED HIMSELF, FROMNING A LITTLE NOT EVEN NOW WAS HE READY TO SAY THAT. "IN A POSITION WHICH I NO LONGER COOLPY," HE AMENDED, RECOVERING HIS PLACIDITY. "ALL THE WORLD WILL KNOW THAT VERY SCON. I AM NO LONGER OWNER OF Blent."

"WHAT?" CRIED BOB, JUMPING UP AND LOCKING HARD AT HARRY. THE SURPRISE CAME NOW.

"AND I AM NO LONGER WHAT YOU CALLED ME JUST NOW—LORD TRISTRAM. YOU know the law about succeeding to peerages and entailed lands? Very

"YOU'VE WRITTEN TO BREAK OFF THE BNGAGEMENT?" BOB SPOKE SLOWLY AND

"YES. SHE ACCEPTED ME UNDER A SERIOUS MISAPPREHENSION. WHEN I

thoughtfully, but with no great surprise.

"Good God. do vou mean what vou sav?"

CONSEQUENTLY NOT I, BUT MISS GAINSBOROUGH SUCCEDS MY MOTHER IN the title and the property. I have informed Miss Gainsborough—I ought TO SAY LADY TRISTRAM—OF THESE FACTS, AND I'M ON MY WAY TO LONDON TO see the lawyers and get everything done in proper order."

WELL. MY BIRTH HAS BEEN DISCOVERED [HE SMILED FOR AN INSTANT] NOT TO SATISFY THAT LAW—THE MERTS OF WHICH. BOB. WE WON'T DISCUSS.

"OH, OF COURSE I DO. DO YOU TAKE ME FOR AN IDIOT, TO COME UP HERE AT SIX IN THE MORNING TO TALK BALDER DASH?" HARRY WAS OBVIOUSLY IRRITATED.

"EVERYBODY WILL KNOW SOON. I CAME TO TELL YOU BECAUSE I FANCY YOU'VE SOME CONCERN IN IT, AND, AS I SAY, I STILL WANT THAT SPOKE PUT IN THE Major's wheel."

Bob sat down and was silent for many moments, smoking hard.

"But Jane won't to that," He Broke out at Last. "She's too straight, too

loyal. If she's accepted you——"

"A BEAUTIFUL IDEA, BOB, IF SHE WAS IN LOVE WITH ME. BUT SHE ISN'T. CAN

the auestion. "AND ANYHOW." HARRY PURSUED. "THE THING'S AT AN END. I SHAN'T MARRY HER. NOW IF THAT SUGGESTS ANY ACTION ON YOUR PART I-WELL. I SHALL BE GLAD I CAME TO BREAKFAST." HE GOT UP AND WENT TO THE WINDOW, LOOKING out on the neat little garden and to the paddock beyond. IN A MOMENT BOB BROADLEY'S HAND WAS LAID ON HIS SHOULDER. HE TURNED. and faced him "What a thing for you! You—you lose it all?" "I have given it all up." "I can't realize it, you know, The change——" "Perhaps I can't either. I don't know that I want to. Bob." "Who made the discovery? How did it come out? Nobody ever had any suspicion of it!" HARRY LOOKED AT HIM LONG AND THOUGHTFULLY, BUT IN THE END HE ONLY SHOOK his head, saving, "Well, it's true anyhow," "IT BEATS ME. I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN ABOUT MYSELF AND—STILL I GIVE YOU MY WORD I HATE ITS HAPPENING. WHO'S THIS GIRL? WHY IS SHE TO COME here? Who knows anything about her?" "YOU DON'T, OF COURSE" HARRY CONCEDED WITH A SMILE, "NO MORE DID I A week ago." "Couldn't you have made a fight for it?"

"Yes, A DEUCED GOOD FIGHT. BUT I CHOSE TO LET IT GO. NOW DON'T GO ON looking as if you didn't understand the thing. It's simple enough."

Bob grunted inarticulately—an obvious, though not a skilful, evasion of

vou tell me vou think she is?"

"THE QUESTION DIDN'T ARISE AS LONG AS MY MOTHER LIVED." SAID HARRY quickly, "Her title was all right, of course,"

"But Lady Tristram—vour mother—must have known——"

THERE WAS ANOTHER QUESTION ON THE TIP OF BOB'S TONGUE, BUT AFTER A GLANCE AT HARRY'S FACE HE DID NOT PUT IT: HE COULD NOT ASK HARRY IF HE had known

"Yes, but you understand why I came here?"

"I'm hanged!" he muttered.

"Yes. That was kind."

"Oh, no. I want to spike the Major's guns, you know," He laughed a LITTLE. "AND-WELL, YES, I THINK I'M PROVOTING THE GENERAL HAPPINESS TOO. if you must know. Now I'm off. Bob."

DAY, WHEN THINGS HAVE SETTLED DOWN, BEAT DUPLAY FOR ME, BOB, GOODbv."

HE HELD OUT HIS HAND AND BOB GRASPED IT. "WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOME

"THAT'S CRIT. REAL CRIT." MUTTERED BOB. AS HE RETURNED TO THE HOUSE AFTER. seeing Harry Tristram on his way.

IT WAS THAT-OR BUSE THE INTOXICATION OF SOME INFLUENCE WHOSE POWER

HAD NOT PASSED AWAY. WHATEVER IT WAS, IT HAD A MARKED EFFECT ON BOB BROADLEY, THERE WAS AN APPEARANCE OF STRENGTH AND RESOLUTION ABOUT IT-AS OF A MAN KNOWING WHAT HE MEANT TO DO AND DOING IT. AS HE

INSPECTED HIS PIGS AN HOUR LATER. BOB CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HE HIMSELE WAS A POOR SORT OF FELLOW. PEOPLE WHO WAITED FOR THE FRUIT TO FALL. INTO THEIR MOUTHS WERE APT TO FIND THAT A HAND INTERVENED. AND PLUCKED IT. THAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM ONCE, AND PROBABLY HE COULD NOT HAVE

HELPED IT; BUT HE MEANT TO TRY TO PREVENT ITS HAPPENING AGAIN. HE WAS

IN A FERMENT ALL THE MORNING, PARTLY ON HIS OWN ACCOUNT, AS MUCH ABOUT

THE REVOLUTION WHICH HAD SLIDDENLY COCURRED IN THE LITTLE KINGDOM ON THE hanks of the Blent IN THE AFTERNOON HE HAD HIS GIG BROUGHT ROLIND AND SET OUT FOR BLENTMOUTH, AS HE PASSED BLENT HALL, HE SAW A GIRL ON THE BRIDGE—A

GIRL IN BLACK LOOKING DOWN AT THE WATER, LADY TRISTRAM? IT WAS STRANGE to call her by the title that had been another's. But he supposed it must

BE LADY TRISTRAM. SHE DID NOT LOOK UP AS HE PASSED: HE RETAINED A VISION OF THE SLACK DREARINESS OF HER POSE. GOING ON HE MET THE IVER CARRIAGE. IVER AND NEELD SAT IN IT. SIDE BY SIDE. THEY WAVED THEIR HANDS IN CARELESS GREETING AND WENT ON TALKING EARNESTLY. ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TOWN HE CAME ON MISS SWINKERTON AND MRS TRUMBLER WALKING TOGETHER. AS HE RAISED HIS HAT, A DIM AND WHOLLY INADEQUATE IDEA

OCCURRED TO HIM OF THE EXCITEMENT INTO WHICH THESE GOOD LADIES WOULD

SOON BE THROWN A FORESHADOWING OF THE WONDER THE CONSTERNATION. THE QUESTIONINGS. THE BUBBLING EVIOTIONS WHICH WERE SOON TO STIR THE QUIET BACKWATERS OF THE VILLAS OF BLENTMOUTH, FOR HIMSELF, WHAT WAS HE GOING TO DO? HE COULD NOT TELL. HE PUT UP HS GIG AT THE INN AND SAUNTERED OUT INTO THE STREET: STILL HE COULD NOT TELL. BUT HE WANDERED. OUT TO FAIRHOLME. UP TO THE GATE, AND PAST IT, AND BACK TO IT, AND PAST IT again.

Now would Harry Tristram do that? No: either he would never have COME OR HE WOULD HAVE BEEN INSIDE BEFORE THIS. BOR'S NEW LOVE OF BOLDNESS DID NOT LET HIM CONSIDER WHETHER THIS WAS THE HAPPIEST. MOMENT FOR ITS DISPLAY. THOSE LEARNED IN THE LORE OF SLICH MATTERS WOULD PROBABLY HAVE ADVISED HIM TO LET HER ALONE FOR A FEW DAYS, OR WEEKS, OR MONTHS, ACCORDING TO THE SUBTILTY OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE OR THEIR

views. Bob rang the bell.

JANIE WAS NOT DENIED TO HIM, BUT ONLY BECAUSE NO CHANCE WAS GIVEN

TO HER OF DENYING HERSELF. A FOOTMAN, UNCONSCIOUS OF CONVULSIONS EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL. SHOWED HIM INTO THE MORNING-ROOM, BUT JANIE'S

own attitude was plain enough in her reception of him.

TALK TO YOU TO-DAY." HER DISWAY WAS EVIDENT. "IF THERE'S NOTHING VERY particular---" "Well, you know there is." Bob interrupted.

"Oh. Bob. Why in the world do you come here to-day? Indeed I can't

SHE TURNED HER HEAD QUICKLY TOWARD HIM "I KNOW THERE IS? WHAT DO

"You've got Harry Tristram's letter, I suppose?" "What do you know of Harry Tristram's letter?" "I haven't seen it, but I know what's in it all the same."

DID NOT QUITE ANTICIPATE THE NEXT DEVELOPMENT. SHE SPRANG UP. SPRANG away from his neighborhood, crying.

"HE CAME UP TO MINGHAM TO-DAY AND TOLD ME." BOB SAT DOWN BY HER. UNINVITED: CERTAINLY THE BELIEF IN BOLDNESS WAS CARRYING HIM FAR. BUT HE

"Then how dare you come here to-day? Yes, I've got the letter—just an hour ago. Have you come to—to triumph over me?" "WHAT AN EXTRAORDINARY IDEA!" REWARKED BOB IN THE SLOW TONES OF A

"You'd call it to condole. I suppose! That's rather worse." BOB CONFINED HIMSELF TO A LONG LOOK AT HER. IT BROUGHT HIM NO

enlightenment. "YOU MUST SEE THAT YOU'RE THE VERY ----" SHE BROKE OFF ABRUPTLY, AND,

turning away, began to walk up and down.

"The very what?" asked Bob.

vou mean?"

"How do you know?"

genuine astonishment.

SHE TURNED AND LOOKED AT HIM: SHE BROKE INTO A PEEVISHLY NERVOUS LAUGH. ANYBODY BUT BOB-REALLY ANYBODY BUT BOB-WOULD HAVE KNOWN! THE LAUGH ENCOURAGED HIM A LITTLE, WHICH AGAIN IT HAD NO RIGHT. to do "I THOUGHT YOU'D BE IN TROUBLE. AND LIKE A BIT OF CHEERING UP." HE SAID.

SHE CONSIDERED A MOMENT, TAKING ANOTHER TURN ABOUT THE ROOM TO DO it

"Oh. HE TOLD ME THE WHOLE THING. THAT—THAT HE'S CHUCKED IT UP, YOU know"

"I mean about me."

"He didn't say much about you. Just that it was all ended, you know,"

"What did Harry Tristram say to you?"

"Did he think I should accept his withdrawal?"

"YES. HE SEEMED QUITE SURE OF IT." ANSWERED BOB. "I HAD MY DOUBTS.

BUT HE SEEMED OUTE SURE OF IT." APPARENTLY BOR CONSIDERED HIS

with a diplomatic air that was ludicrously obvious.

statement reassuring and comforting.

"You had your doubts?"

don't vou? There's no doubt?"

"Yes. I thought perhaps——"

"YOU WERE WRONG THEN, AND HARRY TRISTRAM WAS RIGHT." SHE FLUNG THE WORDS AT HIM IN A FIERCE HOSTILITY. "NOW HE'S NOT LORD TRISTRAM ANY LONGER, I DON'T WANT TO MARRY HIM." SHE PAUSED. "YOU BELIEVE HE ISN'T,

"I believe him all right. He's a fellow you can rely on."

"BUT IT'S ALL SO STRANGE, WHY HAS HE DONE IT? WILL, THAT DOESN'T MATTER.

BOB SAT STOLDLY IN HIS CHAIR. HE DID NOT KNOW AT ALL WHAT TO SAY, BUT HE did not mean to go. He had put NO SPOKE IN THE MAJOR'S WHEEL YET, AND TO DO THAT WAS HIS CONTRACT WITH HARRY TRISTRAM. AS WELL AS HIS OWN

At any rate he's right about me."

observed with some justice.

strong desire.
"Have you sympathized—or condoced—or triumphed—enough?" she
asked; she was fierce still.

"I really don't see what you can have to say. What is there to say?"
"Well, there's just this to say—that I'm jolly glad of it."

"I DON'T KNOW THAT I'VE HAD A CHANCE OF SAYING ANYTHING MUCH." HE

SHE WAS STARTILED BY HIS BLUNT SNOERTY, SO STARTILED THAT SHE PASSED THE OBVIOUS CHANCE OF ACCUSING HIM OF CRUELTY TOWARD HARRY TRISTRAM, AND thought only of how his words touched herself.

"GLAD OF IT! OH, IF YOU KNEW HOW IT MAKES ME FEEL ABOUT MYSELF! BUT you don't, or you'd never be here now."

"WHY SHOULDN'T I BE HERE NOW?" HE SPOKE SLOWLY. AS THOUGH HE WERE

himself searching for any sound reason.

"Oh, it's——" THE POWER OF EXPLANATION FALLED HER. PEOPLE WHO WILL NOT SEE OBVIOUS THINGS SOMETIMES HOLD A VERY STRONG POSITION. JANE

SEE OBVIOUS THINGS SOMETIMES HOLD A VERY STRONG POSITION. JANIE BEGAN TO FEEL RATHER HELPLESS. "DO GO. I DON'T WANT ANYBODY TO COME and find you here." She had turned from command to entreaty.

"I'M JOLLY GLAD," HE RESUMED, SETTLING HIMSELF BACK IN HIS CHAIR, "THAT THE BUSINESS BETWEEN YOU AND HARRY TRISTRAM'S ALL OVER. IT OUGHT NEVER TO have gone so far, you know."

"Are you out of your mind to-day, Bob?"

"And now, what about the Major, Miss Janie?"

SHE FLUSHED RED IN INDIGNATION, PERHAPS IN GULT TOO. "How DARE YOU?

You've no business to——"

"I DON'T KNOW THE RIGHT WAY TO SAY THINGS. I DARE SAY." HE ADMITTED. BUT

"Do you accuse me of having encouraged Major Duplay?"
"I SHOULD SAY YOU'D BEEN PRETTY PLEASANT TO HIM. BUT IT'S NOT MY business to worry myself about Duplay."

WITH AN ABOMINABLE TRANQUILLITY. "STILL I EXPECT YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN ALL

the same "

"I wish you always understood as well what isn't your business."

"And it isn't what you have bone but what you're going to bo that I'm
INTERSTED IN" HE PALISED SEVERAL MOMENTS AND THEN WENT ON VERY

SLOWLY, "I TELL YOU WHAT IT IS. I'M NOT VERY PROUD OF MYSELF. SO IF YOU

HAPPEN TO BE FEELING THE SAME, WHY THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MISS JANE. THE FACT IS, I LET HARRY TRISTRAM PUT ME IN A FUNK, YOU KNOW. HE WAS A SWELL, and he's got a sort of way about him too. But I'm hanged if I'm going to BE IN A FUNK OF DUPLAY." HE SEEVED TO ASK HER APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED FRAMESS OF HIS ATTITUDE. "I'VE BEEN A BIT OF AN ASS ABOUT IT all, I think," he concluded with an air of thoughtful inquiry.

THE OPENING WAS IRRESISTBLE. JANE SEZED IT WITH IMPETUOUS

you think it's over, I'm sure." "Well, I'm glad you agree with me," said he. But he seeved now rather uncertain how he oucht to go on. "That's what I wanted to say," he added, and looked at her as if he thought she mght give him a

CARELESSNESS. "YES. YOU HAVE. YOU HAVE INDEED. ONLY I DON'T SEE WHY

lead. The whole thing was preposterous: Jane was bewildered. He had

OUTRAGED ALL DECENCY IN COMING AT SUCH A MOMENT AND IN TALKING LIKE

TO ASK HER TO GO ON FOR HIM! SHE STOOD STILL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM. looking at him as he sat squarely in his chair. "Since you've said what you wanted to say. I should think you might ao."

this. Then having got (by such utter disregard of all decency) to a point

HE EVEN APPEARED

AT WHICH HE COULD NOT POSSIBLY STOP, HE STOPPED

"YES. I SUPPOSE I MIGHT. BUT ——" HE WAS PUZZLED. HE HAD SAID WHAT HE WANTED TO SAY, OR THOUGHT HE HAD, BUT IT HAD FAILED TO PRODUCE THE

SITUATION HE HAD ANTICIPATED FROM IT. IF HE WENT NOW, LEAVING MATTERS JUST AS THEY STOOD, COULD HE BE CONFIDENT THAT THE SPOKE WAS IN THE

WHEEL? UP TO NOW NOTHING WAS REALLY AGREED UPON EXCEPT THAT HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN AN ASS. NO DOUBT THIS WAS A PREGNANT CONCLUSION. BUT BOB WAS NOT QUITE QLEAR EXACTLY HOW MUCH IT INVOLVED: WHILE IT

ENCOURAGED HIM. IT LEFT HIM STILL DOUBTFUL. "BUT DON'T YOU THINK YOU MIGHT tell me what you think about it?" he asked in the end. "I THINK I'M NOT FIT TO LIVE." CRIED JANIE. "THAT'S WHAT I THINK ABOUT IT.

BOB." HER VOICE TREMBLED: SHE WAS AFRAID SHE MIGHT ORY SOON IF

SOMETHING DID NOT HAPPEN TO RELIEVE THE STRAIN OF THIS INTERVIEW. "AND YOU SAW WHAT HARRY THOUGHT BY HIS SENDING ME THAT LETTER. THE VERY moment it happened, he sent me that letter!"

"I SAW WHAT HE THOUGHT PRETTY WELL, ANYHOW," SAID BOB, SMILING reflectively again.

"Oh. ves. if that makes it any better for me!"

"Well, if he's not miserable, I don't see why you need be."

"The things you don't see would fill an encyclopædia!"

BOB LOOKED AT HIS WATCH: THE ACTION SEEMED IN THE NATURE OF AN

ULTIMATUM: HIS GLANCE FROM THE WATCH TO JANIE HEIGHTENED THE impression.

"You've nothing more to say?" he asked her.

"No. I AGREED WITH WHAT YOU SAID—THAT YOU'D BEEN—AN ASS. I DON'T know that you've said anything else."

"ALL RIGHT." HE GOT UP AND CAME TO HER, HOLDING OUT HIS HAND. "GOOD-BY

SHE TOOK HS HAND—AND SHE HELD IT. SHE COULD NOT LET IT GO. BOB allowed it to lie in hers.

AND I HATE MYSELF WORSE FOR BEING SO GLAD IT'S UNDONE. IT DID SEEM BEST TILL I DID IT. NO, I SUPPOSE I REALLY WANTED THE TITLE AND—AND ALL THAT. I DO hate myself! And now—the very same day—I let you——"

"Oh, dear old Bob, I'm so miserable: I hate myself for having done it.

"You haven't let me do much," he suggested consolingly.

"YES, I HAVE AT LEAST ——" SHE CAME A LITTLE NEARER TO HIM. HE TOOK

hold of her other hand. He drew her to him and held her in his arms.
"That's all right," he remarked, still in tones of consolation.

"IF ANYBODY KNEW THIS! YOU WON'T SAY A WORD, WILL YOU, BOB? NOT FOR EVER SO LONG? YOU WILL PRETEND IT WAS EVER SO LONG BEFORE I—I MEAN, between——?"

"I'll tell any lie," said Bob very cheerfully.

"I should think a—a week would be about right?"

SHE LAUGHED HYSTERICALLY. "BECAUSE I SHOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO LOOK people in the face if anybody knew that on the very same day——"

"A week! No, no. Six months."

"Oh. six months be----"

for the present, then,"

"Well then, three? Do agree to three." "We'll think about three. Still miserable. Janie?" "Yes, still—rather, Now you must go, Fancy if anybody came!" "All right, I'll go. But, I say, you might just drop a hint to the Major." "I can't send him another message that I'm—that I've done it again!" She drew a little away from him. Bob's hearty laugh rang out; his latent SENSE OF HUMOR WAS TOUGHED AT THE IDEA OF THIS SECOND COMMUNICATION TO THE MAJOR. FOR A MOMENT JANIE LOOKED ANGRY, FOR A MOMENT DEEPLY HURT. BOB LAUGHED STILL. THERE WAS NOTHING FOR IT BUT TO JOIN IN HER OWN LAUGH RANG OUT GAYLY AS HE CAUGHT HER IN HIS ARMS again and kissed her. "Oh. if anybody knew!" sighed Janie. BUT BOB WAS FULL OF TRIUMPH. THE TASK WAS DONE. THE SPOKE WAS IN THE WHEEL. THERE WAS AN END OF THE MAJOR AS WELL AS OF HARRY—AND AN BND TO HIS OWN LONG AND NOT VERY HOPEFUL WAITING. HE KISSED HIS LOVE again. THERE WAS A SUDDEN END TO THE SCENE TOO—STARTLING AND SUDDEN. THE DOOR OF THE ROOM OPENED ABRUPTLY. AND IN THE DOORWAY STOOD MRS IVER. LITTLE NEED TO DILATE ON THE SITUATION AS IT APPEARED TO MRS IVER! HAD SHE KNOWN THE TRUTH, THE THING WAS BAD ENOUGH. BUT SHE KNEW NOTHING OF HARRY TRISTRAMS LETTER, AFTER A MOVENT OF CONSTERNATION JANIE RAN TO her, crying,

"I'm not engaged any more to Harry Tristram, mother!"

Mrs IVER SAID NOTHING. SHE STOOD BY THE OPEN DOOR. THERE WAS NO
MSTAKING HER MEANING. WITH A SHAWE-FACED BOW, STRUGGLING WITH AN

MSTAKING HER MEANING. WITH A SHAME-FACED BOW, STRUGGLING WITH AN UNRULY SMLE, BOB BROADLEY GOT THROUGH IT SOMEHOW. JAME WAS LEFT alone with Mrs Iver.

RELATION TOWARD HER MOTHER WHICH NO SELE-RESPECTING YOUNG WOMAN WOULD DESIRE TO OCCUPY. IT MIGHT BE WEEKS BEFORE JANE IVER COULD REALLY ASSERT HER DIGNITY AGAIN. IT WAS STRONG PROOF OF HER AFFECTION FOR BOB BROADLEY THAT, CONSIDERING THE MATTER IN HER OWN ROOM (SHE HAD NOT BEEN EXACTLY SENT THERE. BUT A RETREAT HAD SEEMED ADVISABLE) SHE CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT, TAKING GOOD AND BAD TOGETHER, SHE WAS on the whole glad that he had called.

BUT TO BOB. WITH THE SELFISHNESS OF MAN. MRS IVER'S SUDDEN APPEARANCE WORE RATHER AN AMUSING ASPECT. IT CERTAINLY COULD NOT

Such occurrences as these are very deplorable. Almost of necessity THEY IMPAIR A DALIGHTER'S PROPER POSITION OF SUPERIORITY AND PUT HER IN A

spoil his triumph or impair his happiness.

XV

An Inquisition Interrupted

"MY MOTHER TOLD IT ME JUST AS A BIT OF GOSSIP. SHE DIDN'T BELIEVE IT, NO more did I."

"But you repeated it."

IT WAS IVER WHO WAS PRESSING HER. HE WAS NOT NOW THE KIND HOST MINA KNEW SO WELL. HE WAS RATHER THE KEEN MAN OF BUSINESS, IMPATIENT OF SHUFFLING, INCREDULOUS OF ANY ACTION FOR WHICH HE COULD NOT SEE THE motive, distrustful and very shrewd.

"Oh, I reneated it to My UNCLE, BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT MIGHT AMUSE HIM just for something to say." "Your idea of small talk is rather peculiar." was Iver's dry comment. He

"So is yours of politeness," she creen. "It's My House. Why do you come and bully me in it?"

LOCKED AT THE MAJOR ON HS RIGHT, AND AT NEELD ON HS LEFT AT THE TABLE; Mina was opposite, like the witness before the committee.

DUPLAY WAS SULENLY FURIOUS. POOR MR NEELD'S STATE WAS LAMENTABLE.
HE HAD NOT SPOKEN A WORD THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW. HE HAD TAKEN
REFUGE IN NODDING, EXHAUSTING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NODS IN REPLY TO THE
VARIOUS APPEALS THAT THE OTHER THREE ADDRESSED TO HM. IF THEIR
MEANING HAD BEEN DEVELOPED, HS NODS MUST HAVE LANDED HIM IN A
PITIABLE MESS OF INCONSISTENCIES; HE HAD TRIED TO AGREE WITH
everybody, to sympathize all round, to indorse universally. He had won

"YOU DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE THING IN THE LEAST," HE SAID. "I'VE SPOKEN PLAINLY TO YOU. MY DAUGHTER'S FUTURE IS AT STAKE. YOU SAY IT WAS ALL IDLE GOSSIP. I FIND THAT HARD TO BELIEVE. EVEN IF SO, I MUST HAVE THAT GOSSIP INVESTIGATED AND PROVED TO BE NOTHING BUT gossip."

"Investigate it then," said the Imp peevishly.

"YOU REPUSE ME THE MATERIALS. WHAT YOU TOLD MAJOR DUPLAY WAS TOO vague. You know more. You can put me on the track."

MINA WAS SLENT. NEELD WIPED HIS BROW WITH HIS HANDKERCHEF. MER changed his tone.

momentary applause, and in the end created general dissatisfaction.

Ver had his temper in hand still, but he was hard and resolute.

"MINA, WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS TO YOU. I'M NOT ASHAMED TO REMIND YOU OF IT.

JANE'S A GREAT FRIEND OF YOURS; MY WIFE AND I HAVE WELCOMED YOU FIRST
FOR HER SAKE, THEN FOR YOUR OWN. IS THIS THE BEST RETURN YOU CAN MAKE
US? CONSULT ANYBODY YOU LIKE, IF YOU THINK I'M FREJUDOS, WHETHER YOUR
CONDUCT IS HONORABLE, IS SQUARE." HE PAUSED A MOMENT. "ASK MR
Neeld here what he would do. I'm willing to abide by his judgment."

MINA WAS SORELY TEMPTED TO SAY, "ASK HIM THEN." THE SITUATION WOULD THUS BECOME SO MUCH THE MORE PIQUANT. BUT MR NEELD WAS IN SUCH DISTRESS—TO HER SHARP EYES A DISTRESS SO VISIBLE—THAT SHE DID NOT DARE TO RISK THE COUP. IF HE WIFE LET ALONE HE MIGHT KEEP SLENCE AND QUIET HIS CONSORNOE BY THE REA THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED NO

QUESTIONS. BUT SHE DID NOT VENTURE TO FACE HIM WITH A DEMAND FOR A verdict on her conduct; for her conduct was also his own.

"I MUST JUDGE FOR MYSELF. MR NEED CAN'T HELP ME." SHE ANSWERED.

"I MUST JUDGE FOR MYSELF. MR NEELD CAN'T HELP ME," SHE ANSWERED.
"UNCLE HAS CHOSEN TO SAY HE CAN PROVE THESE THINGS. LET HIM TRY." SHE
DREW HERSELF UP WITH A PRIM PRUDISH AR. "I DON'T THINK IT'S DESIRABLE TO

it's nice of men to come and cross-question me about them."

"OH, WE'RE NOT IN A GIRLS' SCHOOL," SAID MER, WITH A TOUCH OF IRRITATION
HARDLY SUPPRESSED. "WE COME AS MEN OF THE WORLD TO A SENSIBLE

MIX MYSELF UP IN SUCH VERY PECULIAR QUESTIONS AT ALL. AND I DON'T THINK

"Well, then, to a woman of good feeling, who wishes to be honest and to be true to her friends. Duplay, have you no influence with Madame

"I'VE SPARED NO EFFORT," REPLIED THE MAJOR. "I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT SHE WON'T HELP US IN THE END." HIS TONE WAS ALMOST MENACING. MINA,

"Anybody will tell you I'm not that." interrupted the Imp.

woman "

7ahriska?"

REMEMBERING HOW HE HAD TERRORZED THE SECRET OUT OF HER BEFORE, AND RESENTING THE HUMILIATION OF THE MEMORY, STIFFENED HER NECK ONCE more.

"I've nothing to say. You must do as you think best." she said.

MER'S THREATS ALARMED WHERE DURLAY'S ONLY ANNOYED. HE SPOKE CALMLY and with weight.

"Who can make me speak?" she cried, more angry from her fear.
"THE LAW. WHEN WE HAVE REACHED A CERTAIN STAGE IN THE INQUIRY, WE

shall be able to compel you to speak."

"I thought you couldn't move a step without me?"

"You must be made to speak."

lver was rather set back, but he braved it out.

"THE DIFFICULTIES ARE IMMENSELY INCREASED, BUT THEY'RE NOT insuperable," he said.

IVER LOOKED AT THE MAJOR: THE MAJOR RETURNED HIS GLANCE: THEY WERE BOTH resolute men "No. you won't go away." declared Iver slowly.

"I shan't stay to be guestioned and bullied. I shall go abroad."

THE IMP WAS FRIGHTENED: SHE WAS AN IGNORANT YOUNG WOMAN IN A LAND OF WHOSE LAWS SHE KNEW NOTHING. NEED IN WOULD HAVE LIKED TO SUGGEST.

something soothing about the liberty of the individual and the Habeas CORPUS ACT. BUT HE DARRED SHOW NO SYMPATHY—BEYOND NODDING AT HER unobserved. The nod told her nothing. "You'll stop me?" Still she tried to sneer defiantly.

ANOTHER GLANCE PASSED BETWEEN IVER AND DURLAY. A SHREWD OBSERVER MIGHT HAVE INTERPRETED IT AS MEANING. "EVEN IF WE CAN'T DO IT. SHE'LL think we can." "WE SHALL." SAID THE MAJOR. EXECUTING THE BLUFF ON BEHALF OF HIMSELF AND his partner.

THE IMP THOUGHT OF CRYING—NOT FOR HER UNCLE—WHICH WOULD BE HOPPLESS-BUT FOR IVER. SHE CONCLUDED IT WOULD BE HOPPLESS THERE TOO: IVER WOULD NOT HEED TEARS IN BUSINESS HOURS. HOWEVER TENDER-HEARTED HE MIGHT BE IN PRIVATE LIFE. SO SHE LAUGHED AGAIN INSTEAD. BUT THE

laugh was a failure, and Iver was sharp enough to see it. "IN THIS COUNTRY PEOPLE AREN'T ALLOWED TO PLAY FAST AND LOOSE IN THIS FASHION." HE REWARKED. "I'LL TELL YOU ONE WAY IN WHICH WE CAN MAKE YOU

HIS BIRTH AND ON HIS TITLE. WHAT WILL HE DO? CAN HE REST CONTENT WITHOUT

SPEAK. I HAVE ONLY TO GO TO LORD TRISTRAM AND TELL HIM YOU HAVE SPREAD THESE REPORTS. THAT YOU HAVE MADE AND REPEATED THESE IMPUTATIONS ON

refuse to suppose you would commit periury."

DISPROVING THEM AT LAW? I SAY HE CAN'T. IN THOSE PROCEEDINGS YOU WOULD BE COMPELLED TO SPEAK. I MUST ASSUME YOU WOULD THE THE TRUTH. I "I should hold my tongue." said Mina. "Then you'd be sent to prison for contempt of court."

ADMIRABLE AIR OF CONSIDERED CANDOR. SHE WAS NO MATCH FOR HIM, SHE

JENKINSON NEELD? HE WAS ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE TABLE. ON THE

THE BILLEE WORKED WIELL MINA KNEW NOTHING AT ALL OF WHAT HARRY TRISTRAM WOULD DO. OR MIGHT DO. OR MUST DO. OF WHAT THE LAW WOULD. OR MIGHT. OR MIGHT NOT DO. IN THE CIRCLINISTANCES SUPPOSED. AND IVER THOUGH HE KNEW EVERYTHING, WITH A WEIGHTY CONFIDENCE, WITH AN

GREW RATHER PALE. HER LIPS TWITCHED. AND HER BREATH CAME QUICK. TEARS WERE NO LONGER TO BE TREATED MERELY AS A POSSIBLE POLICY: THEY threatened to occur of their own accord. WHAT WONDER THAT A FEELING OF INTOLERABLE MEANNESS ATTACKED MR

BENCH INSTEAD OF IN THE DOCK. HE SAT THERE JUDGING: HIS PROPER PLACE WAS SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE CRIMINAL. IN CHARGE OF THE SAME POLICEWAN. WEARING THE HANDOUFFS TOO. AND HE HAD LESS EXCUSE FOR HIS CRIME THAN SHE. HE WAS EVEN MORE IN IVER'S DEBT: HE HAD FATEN HIS BREAD THESE WEEKS PAST: EVEN NOW HE WAS PRETENDING TO BE HIS ADVISER AND HIS WITNESS: HIS DECEPTION WAS DEEPER THAN HERS. BESIDES HE WAS NOT A

YOUNG WOMAN WHO MIGHT FIND EXCUSE IN THE GLAMOUR OF HARRY'S. POSITION OR THE ATTRACTION OF HARRY'S EYES: HE WAS NOT A ROWANTIC YOUNG WOMAN; HE WAS ONLY A ROMANTIC OLD FOOL. HE COULD BEAR IT NO LONGER. HE MUST SPEAK. HE COULD NOT GET INTO THE DOCK BESIDE HER—FOR THAT would throw away the case which she was defending so gallantly—but he must speak a word for her. "IN MY OPINION." HE SAID NERVOUSLY, BUT NOT WITHOUT HIS USUAL PRECISION.

"WE CAN CARRY THIS MATTER NO FURTHER MADAME ZABRISKA DECLINES TO

SPEAK, I MAY SAY THAT I UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT THE MOTIVE WHICH I BELIEVE INSPIRES HER. SHE REGRETS HER IDLE WORDS. SHE THINKS THAT BY

REPEATING THEM SHE WOULD GIVE THEM GREATER IMPORTANCE. SHE DOES NOT WISH TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY. SHE LEAVES THE MATTER IN YOUR HANDS. IVER. IT IS NOT HER AFFAIR: SHE HAD NO REASON TO SUPPOSE THAT IT the question has become OF IMPORTANCE TO YOU. IN HER VIEW IT IS FOR YOU to take your own steps. She stands aside."

"SHE'S MY FRIEND, SHE'S MY DAUGHTER'S FRIEND. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER MY DAUGHTER MARRIES LORD TRISTRAM OF BLENT OR AN IMPOSTOR (WHETHER YOULDTRAY OR INVOLUNTARY) WITHOUT A NAME, AN ACRE, OR, SO FAR AS I KNOW, A SHILLING. SHE CAN HELP ME SHE STANDS ASIDE. YOU THINK HER RIGHT, Neelld?"

WOULD BE YOURS. BY A TRAIN OF EVENTS FOR WHICH SHE IS NOT ACCOLINTABLE.

"YES, I DO," SAID THE OLD GENTLEWAN WITH THE PROMPTNESS OF desperation.

"THEN YOUR DEA OF FRIENDSHP DIFFERS DIAMETRICALLY FROM MINE. I DESIRE no such friends as that."

IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT THE STING OF IVER'S REMARK WAS SOMEWHAT MITIGATED BY MINA'S COVERTLY TELEGRAPHED GRATITUDE. YET NEELD WAS NO HAPPIER AFTER HIS EFFORT THAN BEFORE IT. A SILENCE FELL ON THEM ALL. MINA GLANCED FROM HER UNCLE'S FACE TO IVER'S. BOTH MEN WERE STERN AND

GLOOMY. HER SENSE OF HEROISM BARELY SUPPORTIED HER, THINGS WERE SO VERY UNCOMPORTABLE. IF HARRY COULD KNOW WHAT SHE SUFFERED FOR HIM, IT WOULD BE SOMETHING. BUT MINA HAD AN IDEA THAT HARRY WAS THINKING VERY LITTLE ABOUT HER. MOREOVER, IN TAKING SIDES IN A CONTROVERSY, PERHARS THE MOST IMPORTANT PRACTICAL QUESTION IS—WHOM HAS ONE GOT TO LIVE WITH? SHE HAD TO LIVE NOT WITH HARRY TRISTRAM, BUT WITH THAT GLOWERING LINGLE MALIOR DURLAY, AGREE WITH YOUR RIVENY WHILES YOU ARE

in the house with him, even more than whiles you are in the way.

At this point—the deadlock demanded by the canons of art having been reached by the force of droumstances and the clash of wills—enter the Deus ex Machina, in the share of a pretty parlormald in a black gown and white afron, with a bow of pink ribbon at her neox; instead of the car, a silver salver, and on it a single letter.

"FOR YOU, MA'AM," SAID THE Deus, AND WITH A GLANCE AT NEELD (MERRLY BECAUSE HE WAS A MAN AND A STRANGER) SHE ENDED HER BRIEF BUT momentous appearance on the stage.

THE IMP WAS IN NO MOOD FOR CEREMONY: ONE GLANCE AT THE HANDWRITING.

AND SHE TORE THE BIVILORE OPEN EAGERLY. MER WAS WHISPERING TO
DUPLAY. NEELD'S EYES WERE ON THE CEILING, BECAUSE HE DID NOT KNOW
where else he could direct them with any sense of safety.

MINA READ. A GASP OF BREATH FROM HER BROUGHT NEELD'S EYES DOWN

FROM THEIR REFUCE AND STAYED IVER AND THE MAJOR'S WHISPERED TALK. SHE
GAZED FROM ONE TO THE OTHER OF THEM. SHE HAD FLUSHED RED; HER FACE
WAS VERY AGITATED AND SHOWED A GREAT STRESS OF FEELING. DUPLAY WITH
AN EXCLAMATION OF SUBPRISE BUT OUT HIS HAND FOR THE LETTER. BUT MINA

AN EXCLAMATION OF SURPRISE PUT OUT HIS HAND FOR THE LETTER. BUT MINA KEPT HERS ON IT, PINNING IT IMMOVABLY TO THE TABLE. FOR ANOTHER MINUTE SHE SAT THERE, FACING THE THREE. THEN ALL COMPOSURE FAILED HER, SHE BURST INTO TEARS, AND BOWING HER HEAD TO MEET HER ARMS ON THE TABLE, covering the letter with her hair, she sobbed violently.

THE FORT SHE HAD BEEN DEFENDING WAS BETRAYED FROM WITHIN. FOR SOME REASON UNKNOWN, UNGLESSABLE, THE CHAMPION SHE FOUGHT FOR HAD FLED FROM THE FIGHT. AND THE FEW WORDS OF HIS MESSAGE—AYE. AND THAT HE

SHOULD SEND A MESSAGE TO HER—PIERCED HER TO THE HEART. STRAINED ALREADY BY HER BATTLE, SHE WAS BROKEN DOWN BY THIS SUDDEN BND TO IT, this sudden and disastrous end.

"I CAN'T HELP IT, I CAN'T HELP IT," THE MEN HEARD HER SAY BETWEEN HER sobs.

HER APOLOGY DID NOTHING TO RELIEVE THEIR EXTREME DISCOMFORT. ALL THREE
FELT BRUTAL; EVEN THE MAJOR'S FACE LOST ITS GLOOMY FIERCENESS AND
RELAXED INTO AN EMBARRASSED SOLICITLDE. "OLIGHT WE TO CALL THE MAID?"

he whispered. "Poor child!" murmured Neeld.

The sobs downated these timd utilerances. Was it they who had

BROUGHT HER TO THS STATE, OR WAS IT THE LETTER? IVER STIRRED UNEASLY IN HIS CHAIR, HIS BUSINESS MANNER AND UNCHARITABLE SHREWDNESS SUDDENLY SEEMING OUT OF PLACE. "GIVE HER TIME," HE SAID GENTLY. "GIVE HER TIME, poor girl."

MINA RAISED HER HEAD; TEARS RAN DOWN HER CHEEKS; SHE WAS WOE

NEELD CAUGHT AT THE STATE OF AFFAIRS BY AN INTUTION TO WHICH HIS FREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE HELPED HIM. DUPLAY HAD BEEN BAFFLED BY HARRY'S DIPLOMACY AND EXPECTED NO ACTION FROM HIS SIDE. TO NEELD SUCH A DEVELOPMENT SEEMED POSSIBLE. AND IT WAS THE ONLY THING WHICH TO HIS

"Time's no use." she groaned. "It's all over now."

who knew it." she said to Iver.

personified.

mind could throw light on Mina's behavior.
"Won't you show us the letter?" he asked gently.
"Oh. YES. AND I'LL TELL YOU ANVIHING YOU LIKE NOW. IT DOESN'T MATTER NOW."

SHE LOOKED AT NEELD: SHE WAS LOYAL TO THE END. "I WAS THE ONLY PERSON."

THAT WAS TOO MUCH. TIMID HE MIGHT BE, EVEN TO THE POINT OF COWARDICE BUT NOW, WHEN THE RESULT OF CONFESSION WOULD BE NO HARM

TO ANYBODY BUT HIMSELF, NEELD FELT HE MUST SPEAK IF HE WERE TO HAVE
ANY CHANCE OF GOING ON THINKING HIMSELF A GENTLEWAN—AND IT IS AN
unpleasant thing for a man to realize that he has none.

"I must correct Madame Zabriska." he said. "I knew it too."

"What?" cried Duplay. Iver turned quick scrutinizing eyes on his friend.

"You knew too? You knew what?" he demanded.

"The facts we have been endeavoring to obtain from Madame Zabriska" "OH. IT'S ALL IN THE LETTER." CRIED MINA IN A QUICK BURST OF IMPATIENCE. "There it is." SHE FLUNG IT ACROSS TO IVER AND RESTED HER CHIN ON HER HANDS. WHILE HER

"The facts about——"

EYES FOLLOWED HIS EXPRESSION AS HE READ. DUPLAY WAS ALL EXCITEMENT. BUT OLD MR NEELD HAD SUNK BACK IN HIS CHAIR WITH A LOOK OF FRETEUL

WEARNESS. IVER WAS DELIBERATE: HIS GLASSES NEEDED SOME FITTING ON: THE SHEET OF PAPER REQUIRED SOME SMOOTHING AFTER ITS CONTACT WITH Mina's disordered and disordering hair. Besides, he was really as

EXCITED AS DURIAY AND ALMOST AS AGITATED AS MINA HERSELE. BUT THESE

EMOTIONS ARE NOT APPROPRIATE TO BUSINESS MEN. SO HE WAS VERY CALM AND DELIBERATE IN HIS DEVEANOR: HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN GOING TO DELIVER a whole speech from the way he cleared his throat. "I HAVE THROWN UP THE SPONGE AND FLED. PLEASE MAKE FRIENDS WITH LADY Tristram of Blent —H T "

IT WAS ENOUGH. WHAT NEED OF FURTHER WITNESS? AND IF THERE HAD BEEN. THE PRINCIPAL CRIMINAL HAD CONFESSED AND THE LIPS OF HIS ACCOMPLICES were unsealed. FOR A WHILE NOBODY SPOKE, THEN NEELD, LEANING FORWARD TO THE TABLE AGAIN, BEGAN TO EXPLAIN AND EXCUSE HIS SILENCE, TO SPEAK OF THE HARD CASE HE WAS IN. OF THE ACCIDENTAL AND CONFIDENTIAL CHARACTER OF HIS KNOWLEDGE. NETTHER MINA NOR HER UNCLE EVEN APPEARED TO HEED HIM. IVER SEEMED TO LISTEN PATIENTLY AND COURTEOUSLY. BUT HIS MIND TOO WAS DISTRACTED. AND HE DID NOT CEASE FIDGETING WITH HARRY TRISTRAM'S LETTER and referring ever and again to its brief sufficient message.

"I DARE SAY I WAS WRONG. THE POSITION WAS VERY DIFFICULT," PLEADED Neeld.

"YES, YES," SAID IVER IN AN ABSENT TONE, "DIFFICULT NO DOUBT, NEELD; BOTH FOR YOU AND MINA. AND NOW HE HAS-HE HAS GIVEN UP THE GAME

"No," FLASHED OUT MINA, RESTORED IN A MOMENT TO ANIMATION, HER FIGHTING INSTINCTS AWAKE AGAIN. "He'D NEVER HAVE BEEN FORCED. HE must have done it of his own accord."

"BUT WHY?" AGAIN HE RETURNED TO THE LETTER. "AND WHY DOES HE WRITE TO you?"

"Because he knew I knew about it. He didn't know that Mr Neeld did."

"AND THS—THS LADY TRISTRAM OF BLENT?" INER'S VOICE WAS HESTIATING AND CONSCIOUS AS HE PRONOUNCED THE NAME THAT WAS TO HAVE BECOME his daughter's.

AGAIN THE PINK-RIBBONED. Deus MADE ENTRY ON THE SCENE, TO GIVE THE speaker a more striking answer.

"A lady to see you, ma'am. Miss Gainsborough."

himself! Or was his hand forced?"

quick vet hesitating step.

WHERE HE IS?" SHE LOOKED AT THE MEN AND BLUSHED AS SHE RETURNED their bow with a hurried recognition.

"No, I haven't seen him. I know nothing," said Mina.

"THE LETTER, MINA," DURLAY REMINDED HER, AND MINA HELD IT OUT TO

THE THREE MEN SPRANG TO THEIR FEET; WITH A SUDDEN WRENCH MINA TURNED HER CHAIR ROUND TOWARD THE DOOR. A TALL SLIM GIRL IN BLACK CAME IN WITH A

"Forgive me, Madame Zabriska. But I had to come. Harry said you were his eriend. Do you know anything about him? Do you know

Cecily.

Cecily came forward, took and read it. She looked again at the group, evidently puzzled.

"He doesn't say where he's gone," she said.

"I'M CEOLY GANSBOROUGH. BUT I THINK HE MEANS ME WHEN HE SAYS Lady Tristram of Blent."

"Yes, he must mean you, Miss Gainsborough."

"You are——?" lver began.

"Yes, because last night he told me—it was so strance, but he wouldn't have done it unless it was true—he told me that he wasn't Lord Tristram really, and that I——" Her eyes travelled quicky over

THER FACES, AND SHE RE-READ THE LETTER. "DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT?" SHE DEWANDED IMPERIOUSLY. "TELL ME, DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE means by this letter and whether what he says is true?"

"WE KNOW WHAT HE MEANS," ANSWERED IVER GRAVELY, "AND WE KNOW THAT it's true."

"Have you known it long?" she asked.

MER GLANCED AT DUPLAY AND NEELD. IT WAS NEELD WHO ANSWERED GENTLY:
"SOME OF US HAVE BEEN SURE OF IT FOR SOME TIME. BUT ______" HE LOOKED

at Mina before he went on. "But we didn't intend to speak."

CECILY STOOD THERE, SEEMING TO CONSIDER AND FOR A MOMENT MEETING

Mina's intense gaze which had never left her face.

"Had he known for long?" was her next question.

IT MET WITH NO IMMEDIATE ANSWER. DUPLAY ROSE ABRUPILY AND WALKED TO THE MANTELPECE; HE LEANT HIS ARM ON IT AND TURNED HALF AWAY FROM THE group at the table.

"Had he known for long?" Cecily repeated.

confidently.

"EVER SO LONG," ANSWERED MINA ZABRISKA IN A LOW VOICE, BUT VERY

"Ah, he was waiting till Lady Tristram died?"

WER NOODED; HE THOUGHT WHAT SHE SUGGESTED A VERY GOOD EXPLANATION
TO ACCEPT. IT WAS PLAUSIBLE AND SENSIBLE, IT EQUIPPED HARRY TRISTRAM
WITH A DECENT EXCUSE FOR HIS PAST SILENCE, AND A SOUND REASON FOR THE
MOMENT OF HIS DISCLOSURE. HE LOCKED AT NEELD AND FOUND READY
ACQUESCENCE IN THE OLD GENTLEWAN'S APPROVING NOD. BUT MINA BROKE

WAS ALL THE WORLD TO HIM. HE NEVER MEANT TO SPEAK." A QUICK REVENBRANCE FLASHED ACROSS HER. "WE'RE YOU WITH HIM IN THE LONG Gallery last night?" she cried. "With him there for hours?"

"Yes, we were there."

"No. no. that had nothing to do with it. He never meant to speak. Blent

out impatiently—

"Yes, I saw you from the terrace here. Did he tell you there?"

"HE TOLD ME THERE." THERE WAS EMBARRASSMENT AS WELL AS WONDER IN her manner now.

"WELL THEN, YOU MUST KNOW WHY HE TOLD YOU. WE DON'T KNOW." MINA WAS

very peevish.
"Is IT ANY USE ASKING ——?" IVER BEGAN. AN UNCEREMONOUSLY IMPATIENT
AND PEREMPTORY WAVE OF MINA'S ARM REDUCED HIM TO SILENCE. HER
curiosity left no room for his prudent counsels of reticence.

"What were you doing in the Gallery?" demanded Mina.
"I was looking at all the things there and—and admining them. He came up presently and—I don't reveneer that he said very much. He watched me then he asked me if I loved the things. And—well, then

HE TOLD ME. HE TOLD ME AND WENT STRAIGHT OUT OF THE ROOM. I WAITED A LONG WHILE, BUT HE DIDN'T COME BACK, AND I HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO HIM SINCE." SHE LOOKED AT EACH OF THEM IN TURN AS THOUGH SOMEONE MIGHT

be able to help her with the puzzle.

SLOWLY CECLY'S EYES SETTLED ON MINA'S FACE. THUS SHE STOOD SILENT FOR A full minute.

"Somehow you made him do it-you." said Mina Zabriska.

ASKED WITH A SUDDEN ACCESS OF AGITATION. "BUT WHAT ARE WE TO DO now?" MINA HAD NO THOUGHT FOR THAT: IT WAS THE THING ITSELF THAT ENGROSSED HER.

"YES, I THINK SO, I THINK I MUST HAVE SOMEHOW." HER VOICE ROSE AS SHE

not the consequences. "THERE WILL, OF COURSE, BE A GOOD MANY FORWALITIES." SAID IVER, "SUBJECT

to those. Limagine that the—er—guestion settles itself." His phrase seemed to give Cecily no enlightenment.

"Settles itself?" she repeated.

"Subject to formal proof. I MEAN, AND IN THE ABSENCE OF OPPOSITION. FROM" (HE HESITATED A SECOND) "-FROM MR TRISTRAM, WHICH CAN'T BE anticipated now, you will be put into possession of the estates and the

TITLE." HE POINTED TO HARRY'S LETTER WHICH WAS STILL IN HER HANDS. "YOU see what he himself calls you there, Miss Gainsborough." SHE MADE NO ANSWER. WITH ANOTHER GLANCE AT NEELD, IVER PUSHED BACK HIS CHAIR AND ROSE. NEELD FOLLOWED HIS EXAMPLE. THEY FELT THAT THE

INTERVIEW HAD BETTER END. DUPLAY DID NOT MOVE, AND CECLY STOOD

WHERE SHE WAS. SHE SEEMED TO ASK WHAT WAS TO BE DONE WITH HER: HER DESOLATION WAS SAD, BUT IT HAD SOMETHING OF THE COMIC IN IT. SHE was so obviously lost.

"YOU MIGHT WALK DOWN TO BLENT WITH MISS GAINSBOROUGH, MINA," IVER suggested.

"No." CRIED THE IMP IN A PASSION. LEARING UP FROM HER CHAIR. "I DON'T

Imp's voice was choked: she could get no further. OLD MR NEED CAME FORWARD. HE TOOK HARRY'S LETTER FROM CECLY AND gave it to Mina. "My DEAR, MY DEAR!" HE SAID GENTLY, AS HE PATTED HER HAND, "READ THAT again." Mina read, and then scrutinized Cecily keenly. "WELL. I'LL WALK DOWN WITH YOU." SHE SAID GRUDGINGLY. SHE CAME NEARER. TO CECILY, "I WONDER WHAT YOU DID!" SHE EXCLAIMED, SCANNING HER FACE. "I must find out what you did!" IVER CAME FORWARD. "I MUST INTRODUCE MYSELF TO YOU. MISS Gainsborough, I live at Blentmouth, and my name is Iver." "Ver!" She looked at him guriousiy. At once he efit that she had knowledge of the relation between his daughter and Harry Tristram. "YES. AND SINCE WE SHALL PROBABLY BE NEIGHBORS ---- "HE HELD OUT HIS HAND. SHE PUT HERS INTO IT. STILL WITH A BEWILDERED AIR. NEELD CONTENTED HIMSELF WITH A BOW AS HE PASSED HER. AND DUPLAY ESCAPED FROM THE ROOM WITH A RAPIDITY AND STILLNESS SUGGESTIVE OF A DESIRE NOT TO BE OBSERVED. WHEN THE MEN WERE GONE CECLY SANK INTO A CHAIR AND COVERED HER FACE WITH HER HANDS FOR A MINUTE. SHE LOOKED UP TO FIND

Mina regarding her, still with mingled inquisitiveness and hostility.

"What were you all doing here when I came?" asked Cecily.

"They were trying to make me tell what I knew about Harry Tristram.

CECLY STARTED AND HER CHEEKS FLUSHED RED AS THOUGH SHE HAD BEEN.

"It's ALL HER FALLT THAT HARRY TRISTRAMS—THAT HARRY TRISTRAMS—" THE

want to have anything to do with her."

struck, Iver looked vexed and ashamed.

"Wouldn't you?" Ceoly's eyes sparkled in sudden approval, and she Broke into a smile. "I like you for that," she cried. "I wouldn't have told

either." "But now!" The Imp Pouted Disconsolately. "Well, it's not your Fault, I suddose, and----" She walked up to Ceolly and gave her a brief bill

FRIENDLY KISS. "AND YOU NEEDN'T BE SO UPSET AS ALL THAT ABOUT IT. WE'LL just talk over what we'd better do."

THERE WAS NOT MUCH PROSPECT OF THEIR TALK AFFECTING EITHER THE LAWS OF ENGLAD OR THE DEPOSITION OF HARRY TRIST

ENGLAND OR THE DETERMINATION OF HARRY TRISTRAM TO ANY APPRECIABLE EXTENT. BUT THE PROPOSAL SEEMED TO COMPORT CECILY; AND THE IMP RANG THE BELL FOR TEA. COMING BACK FROM THIS TASK, SHE GAVE CECILY A CRITICAL glance.

"You'll look it anyhow," she concluded with a reluctant smile.

MEANWHLE IVER AND NEELD DROVE BACK TO BLENTMOUTH, IVER SAID NOTHING ABOUT HIS FRIEND'S BYGONE TREACHERY; ODDLY ENOUGH IT WAS NOT IN THE culprit's mind either.

"Now, Neeld, to break this news to Janie!" said Iver.

Neeld nodded once again.

Neelu nouded once again.

But I wouldn't tell."

BUT OF COURSE A SITUATION QUITE OTHER THAN THEY EXPECTED AWAITED THEM at Fairholme.

XVI

The New Life

"YOU HAVEN'T MENTIONED IT TO THE YOUNG MAN HIMSELF?" ASKED LADY Evenswood.

"Certainly not. I've only seen him once, and then he didn't talk of his own affairs. He takes the thing very well. He's lost his position and he's the hero of the newspapers, and he bears both afflictions quite coolly. A lad of good balance, I think."

"Is he agreeable?"

"Hum. I'm not sure of that. No excess of modesty. I fancy."

"I SUPPOSE YOU MEAN HE'S NOT SHY? ALL YOUNG MEN ARE CONCETED. I think I should like you to bring him to see me."

FOR FORTY YEARS SUCH AN INTIMATION FROM LADY EVENSWOOD HAD BNUOYED. THE RANK OF A COMMAND; LORD SOUTHEND RECEIVED IT WITH PROPER objection.

"The solution I spoke of has occurred to some of us," he went on.
"He's poor now, but with that he could make a marriage. The case is
very exceptional——"

"So is what you propose, George."

"Oh, there are precedents. It was done in the Bearsdale case."

"THERE WAS A DOUBT THERE" LADY EVENSWOOD KNEW ALL ABOUT THE

danced with both the parties to it. "THE HOUSE WAS AGAINST THE MARRIAGE UNANIMOUSLY." BUT HE DID NOT deny the doubt.

BEARSDALE CASE: THOUGH IT WAS ANCIENT HISTORY TO SOUTHEND. SHE HAD

"IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO APPROACH DISNEY." SOUTHEND SPOKE WITH SOME APPEARANCE OF TIMIDITY. MR DISNEY WAS PRIME MINISTER. "AND THE TRUTH IS. NONE OF US SEEMED TO LIKE THE JOB. SO JOHN FULLOOMBE suggested you."

"Well, what are you going to do?" she asked.

"What brave men you are!" Her face wrinkled humorously. "WELL. HE MIGHT BITE US. AND HE COULDN'T BITE YOU-NOT SO HARD

anvhow." "AND YOU WANT ME TO ASK FOR A HIGHER RANK! THAT WASN'T DONE IN THE Bearsdale case, nor in any other that I ever heard of."

"We shouldn't press that. A barony would do. But if Disney thought

that under the very exceptional circumstances a viscounty——" "I DON'T SEE WHY YOU WANT IT." SHE PERSISTED. THE SLIGHT EMBARRASSMENT IN SOUTHEND'S MANNER STIRRED THE OLD LADY'S CURIOSITY. "IT'S RATHER ODD TO REWARD A MAN FOR HIS MOTHER'S ----. THERE, I DON'T SAY A WORD ABOUT

Addie. I took her to her first ball, poor girl." "Disney used to know her as a girl."

"IF YOU'RE RELYING ON ROBERT DISNEY'S ROMANTIC MEMORIES ---- BUT SHE STOPPED, ADDING AFTER A PAUSE, "WELL, ONE NEVER KNOWS, BUT AGAIN,

why a viscounty?"

DRIVEN INTO A CORNER, BUT EVIDENTLY RATHER ASHAMED OF HIMSELF, Southend explained.

between him and the girl." "What, the New Lady Tristram? Well, George romance has taken possession of you to-day!"

"THE VISCOUNTY WOULD BE MORE CONVENIENT IF A MATCH CAME ABOUT

"NOT AT ALL." HE PROTESTED INDIGNANTLY. "IT'S THE OBVIOUSLY SENSIBLE WAY Out " "Then they can do it without a viscounty."

"Oh. no. not without something. There's the past, you see."

"AND A SPONGE IS WANTED? AND THE BIGGER THE SPONGE THE BETTER? AND I'M TO GET MY NOSE BITTEN OFF BY ASKING ROBERT DISNEY FOR IT? AND IF BY A MRACLE HE SAID YES. FOR ALL I KNOW SOMEBODY ELSE MIGHT SAY no!"

THIS DARK RETERRINGS TO THE HIGHEST QUARTERS CAUSED SOUTHEND TO NOD. THOUGHTFULLY: THEY DISCUSSED THE PROBABLE ATTITUDE—A THEME TOO EXALTED TO BE MORE THAN MENTIONED HERE. "ANYHOW THE FIRST THING IS TO

sound Disney," continued Southend. "I'LL THINK ABOUT IT AFTER I'VE SEEN THE YOUNG MAN," LADY EVENSWOOD promised. "Have you any reason to suppose he likes his cousin?"

"None at all—except, of course, the way he's cleared out for her." "Yielding gracefully to necessity, I suppose?"

"REALLY, I DOUBT THE NECESSITY; AND, ANYHOW, THE GRACEFULNESS NEEDS

SOME EXPLANATION IN A CASE LIKE THIS. STILL I ALWAYS FANCIED HE WAS GOING TO MARRY ANOTHER GIRL. A DAUGHTER OF A FRIEND OF MINE-WER-YOU

"OH, YES. BRING HARRY TRISTRAM TO SEE ME," SAID SHE. "GOOD-BY,

know who I mean?"

George. You're looking very well."

- "Oh. I finished getting old before you were forty." A THOUGHT STRUCK SOUTHEND "YOU MIGHT SUGGEST THE VISCOUNTY AS
- "I SHAN'T SUGGEST ANYTHING TILL I'VE SEEN THE BOY—AND I WON'T PROMISE TO then."
- LATER IN THE AFTERNOON SOUTHEND DROPPED IN AT THE IMPERIUM, WHERE TO HIS SURPRISE AND PLEASURE HE FOUND IVER IN THE SMOKING-ROOM ASKED. how he came to be in town. Iver explained:
- "I REALLY RAN AWAY FROM THE CACKLING DOWN AT BLENTMOUTH. ALL OUR OLD LADIES ARE TALKING FIFTEEN TO THE DOZEN ABOUT HARRY TRISTRAM, AND LADY TRISTRAM, AND ME, AND MY FAMILY, AND—WELL, I DARE SAY YOU'RE IN IT BY
- NOW. SOUTHEND! THERE'S AN OLD CAT NAMED SWINKERTON, WHO IS POSITIVELY BEYOND HUMAN ENDURANCE, SHE WAYLAYS ME IN THE STREET. AND MRS TRUMBLER. THE VICAR'S WIFE, COMES AND TALKS ABOUT Providence to my poor wife every day. So I fled."
- "Leaving your wife behind, I suppose?"

"And vou're looking very voung."

contingent on the marriage."

- "Oh, she doesn't mind Mrs Trumbler, But I do."
- "Well. There's a good deal of cackling up here too. But tell me about THE NEW GIRL." LORD SOUTHEND DID NOT APPEAR TO CONSIDER HIS OWN. question "cackling" or as tending to produce the same.
- "I'VE ONLY SEEN HER ONCE. SHE'S IN ABSOLUTE SECLUSION AND LETS NOBODY IN EXCEPT MINA ZABRISKA—A FUNNY LITTLE FOREIGN WOMAN—YOU DON'T know her."
- "I KNOW ABOUT HER. I SAW IT IN THE PAPER. SHE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH
- it?"

"AND SHE'S STRUCK UP A FRIBNDSHIP WITH CECILY GAINSBOROUGH—LADY TRISTRAM, LOUGHT TO SAY, LHAD A FEW WORDS WITH THE FATHER. THE POOR OLD CHAP DOESN'T KNOW WHETHER HE'S ON HIS HEAD OR HIS HEELS: BUT AS THEY'RE OF ABOUT EQUAL VALUE. I SHOULD IMAGINE. FOR THINKING PURPOSES. IT doesn't much matter. Ah, here's Neeld. He came up with me." THE ADVENT OF NEELD PRODUCED MORE DISCUSSION, YET SOUTHEND SAID NOTHING OF THE MATTER WHICH HE HAD BROUGHT TO LADY EVENSWOOD'S ATTENTION. DISCRETION WAS NECESSARY THERE. BESIDES HE WISHED TO KNOW HOW THE LAND LAY AS TO JANIE IVER. ON THAT SUBJECT HIS FRIEND preserved silence. "AND THE WHOLE THING WAS ACTUALLY IN OLD JOE'S DIARY!" FXCLAIMED. Southend NEELD. ALWAYS ANNOYED AT THE "JOE." ADMITTED THAT THE MAIN FACTS HAD BEEN RECORDED IN MR CHOLDERTON'S JOURNAL, AND THAT HE HIMSELF HAD KNOWN THEM WHEN NOBODY BLSE IN ENGLAND DID—SAVE, OF COURSE, THE

"YES." IVER PASSED AWAY FROM THAT SIDE OF THE SUBJECT IMMEDIATELY.

conspirators themselves. "AND YOU KEPT IT DARK? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE AS DEEP AS THAT, NEELD." He looked at the old gentleman with great amazement.

"NEELD WAS IN AN EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT POSITION." SAID IVER. "I'VE COME "You introduced us to one another." he reminded him with a smile.

TO SEE THAT." HE PAUSED. LOOKING AT SOUTHEND WITH AN AMUSED AIR. "Bless My Soul, so I DID! I'D FORGOTTEN, WELL, IT SEEMS MY FATE TOO TO BE MIXED UP IN THE AFFAIR." JUST AT PRESENT, HOWEVER, HE WAS ASSISTING FATE rather actively.

"It's everybody's. The Blent's on fire from Mingham to the sea."

"I've seen Harry Tristram."

"Ah. how is he?" asked Neeld.

COLLON'T BE BETTER SATISFIED WITH HIMSELF IF HE'D TURNED OUT TO BE A duke."

"WE KNOW HARRY'S AIRS," IVER SAID, SMLING INDULGENILY. "BUT THERE'S STUFF IN HIM" A NOTE OF RECRET CAME INTO HIS VOICE. "HE TREATED ME VERY

"NEVER SAW A YOUNG MAN MORE COMPOSED IN ALL MY LIFE. AND HE

BADLY—I KNOW NEELD WON'T ADMIT IT, BUT HE DID. STILL I LIKE HIM AND I'D help him if I could."

"WELL. HE ATONED FOR ANYTHING WRONG BY OWNING UP IN THE BND."

remarked Southend.
"That wasN't FOR My SAKE OR FOR —— WELL, IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH US.

As far as we were concerned he'd be at Blent to-day. It was Cecly Gainsborough who did it."

"Yes. I wonder-----"

WER ROSE DECISIVELY. "LOOK HERE, SOUTHEND, IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO EXACTLY WHAT ALL MY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS, BEGINNING WITH MISS SWINKERTON, ARE DOING, I SHALL GO AND WRITE LETTERS." WITH A NOD HE WAIKED INTO THE NEXT ROOM, LEAVING NEELD ALONE WITH HIS INQUISTIVE friend. Southend lost no time.

Triend. Southend lost no time.

"What's happened about Janie Iver? There was some talk——"

"It's ALL OVER." WHSPERED NEELD WITH NEEDLESS CAUTION. "HE RELEASED

her, and she accepted the release."
"What, on the ground that——?"

"REALLY I DON'T KNOW ANY MORE. BUT IT'S FINALLY OVER: YOU MAY DEPEND

upon that."

Southend Lit a cigar with a satisfied air. On the whole he was glad to hear the news

"No, I'm going down to Iver's again in August."

"You want to SEE THE END OF IT? COME, I KNOW THAT'S IT!" HE LAUGHED AS he walked away.

MEANWHILE HARRY TRISTRAM, UNCONSCIOUS OF THE EFFORTS WHICH WERE

"Staving much longer in town?" he asked.

BEING MADE TO ARRANGE HIS FUTURE, AND PAYING AS LITTLE ATTENTION AS HE
COULD TO THE BUZZ OF GOSSIP ABOUT HIS PAST, HAD SETTLED DOWN IN QUIET
ROOMS AND WAS LOCKING AT THE WORLD FROM A NEW POINT OF VIEW. HE WAS
IN SECLUSION LIKE HIS COUSIN: THE MOURNING THEY SHARED FOR ADDIE

TRISTRAM WAS SUFFICIENT EXCUSE, AND HE FOUND HIS CHIEF FLEASURE IN WANDERING ABOUT THE STREETS. THE SEASON WAS NOT OVER YET, AND HE LIKED TO GO OUT ABOUT EIGHT IN THE EVENING AND WATCH THE GREAT CITY starting forth to enjoy itself. Then he could feel its life in all the rush and the gayety of it. Somehow now he seemed more part of it and more at

HOME IN IT THAN WHEN HE USED TO RUN UP FOR A FEW DAY'S FROM HIS COUNTRY
HOME. THEN BLENT HAD BEEN THE CENTRE OF HIS LIFE, AND IN TOWN HE WAS
BUT A STRANGER AND A SOJOURNER. BLENT WAS CONE, AND LONDON IS HOME
TO HOMELESS MEN. THERE WAS A SUGGESTION FOR HIM IN THE AIR OF IT, AN
IMPLISE THAT WAS GRADUALLY BUT STRONGLY URGING HIM TO ACTION. TELLING

HIM THAT HE MUST BEGIN TO DO. FOR THE MOMENT HE WAS NOTORIOUS, BUT the talk and the staring would be over soon—THE SOONER THE BETTER, HE ADDED MOST SINCERELY. THEN HE MUST DO SOMETHING IF HE WISHED STILL TO BE, OR EVER AGAIN TO BE, ANYBODY. OTHERWISE HE COULD EXPECT NO MORE THAN TO BE POINTED OUT NOW AND THEN TO THE CURIOUS AS THE MAN WHO

AS HE LOOKED BACK, HE SEEMED TO HIMSELF TO HAVE LIVED HTHERTO ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER OF LIFE AS WELL AS OF THE RIVER BLENT; THERE HAD BEEN NO NEED OF SWIMMING. BUT HE WAS IN THE CURRENT NOW; HE MUST SWIM OR

HAD ONCE BEEN TRISTRAM OF BLENT AND HAD CEASED TO BE SUCH IN A

puzzling manner.

SINK. THIS IDEA TOOK SHAPE AS HE WATCHED THE CARRAGES, THE LINES OF SCAMPERING HANSOMS, THE CROWDS WAITING AT THEATRE DOORS. EVERY MAN AND EVERY VEHICLE. EVERY DANDY AND EVERY URCHIN. REPRESENTED SOME EFFORT. IF IT WERE ONLY AT ONE END OF THE SCALE TO BE MAGNIFICENT. AT THE OTHER NOT TO BE HUNGRY. NO SUCH NOTIONS HAD BEEN FOSTERED BY DAYS SPENT ON THE BANKS OF THE BLENT, "WHAT SHALL I DO? WHAT SHALL I DO?" THE QUESTION HUMMED IN HIS BRAIN AS HE WALKED ABOUT. THERE WERE SUCH INFINITE VARIETIES OF THINGS TO DO. SUCH A MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE DOING THEM. TO SOME MEN THIS REFLECTION BRINGS DESPAIR OR BEWILDERMENT: TO HARRY (AS INDEED LORD SOUTHEND WOULD HAVE EXPECTED FROM HIS OBSERVATION OF HIM) IT WAS A TITILLATING EVIDENCE OF GREAT OPPORTUNITIES. STIRRING HIS MIND TO A BUSY CONSIDERATION OF CHANCES THUS THEN IT SEEMED AS THOUGH BUENT MIGHT FALL INTO THE BACKGROUND, HIS LOVED BLENT, PERHAPS HIS NOT THINKING OF IT HAD BEGUN. IN WILFULNESS. OR EVEN IN FEAR: BUT HE FOUND THE RULE HE HAD MADE FAR EASIER TO KEEP THAN HE HAD EVER EXPECTED. THERE HAD BEEN A SORT OF RELEASE FOR HIS MIND: HE HAD NOT FORESEEN THIS AS A POSSIBLE RESULT OF HIS GREAT SACRIFICE. HE EVEN FELT RATHER RICHER: WHICH SEEMED A STRANGE PARADOX. TILL HE REFLECTED THAT THE OWNERS OF BLENT HAD SELDOM BEEN ABLE TO LAY HANDS READILY ON A FLUID SUM. OF FIFTEEN THOUSAND POLINDS SUBJECT TO NO CLAIMS FOR HOUSES TO BE REPAIRED. BUILDINGS TO BE MAINTAINED, COTTAGES TO BE BUILT, WAGES TO BE PAID, AND THE DOZEN OTHER WAYS IN WHICH MONEY DISPERSES ITSELF OVER THE SURFACE OF A LANDED ESTATE. HE HAD FIFTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS IN FORM AS GOOD AS CASH. HE WAS LIVING MORE OR LESS AS HE HAD ONCE MEANT TO LIVE IN THIS ONE PARTICULAR: HE WAS LIVING WITH A RESPECTABLE IF NOT A BIG CHECK BY HIM. READY FOR ANY EMERGENCY WHICH MIGHT ARISE—AN EMERGENCY NOT now of a danger to be warded off, but of an opportunity to be seized. THESE NEW THOUGHTS SUITED WELL WITH THE VISIT WHICH HE PAID TO LADY EVENSWOOD AND GAINED FRESH STRENGTH FROM IT. HIS PRIDE AND INDEPENDENCE HAD MADE HIM HESITATE ABOUT GOING. SOUTHEND. AMAZED YET HALF ADMIRING, HAD BEEN OBLIGED TO PLEAD, REMINDING HIM THAT IT WAS NOT MERELY A WOMAN NOR MERELY A WOMAN OF RANK WHO

wished to make his acquaintance, but also a very old woman who had known Hs MOTHER AS A CHLD. HE FURTHER OFFERED HS OWN COMPANY, SO

the name. Southend had chuckled again half admiringly over that.

ALTHOUGH THE ROOM WAS IN DEEP SHADOW AND VERY STILL, AND THE OLD WHITE-HAIRED LADY THE MAGE OF PEACE, FOR HARRY THERE TOO THE CURRENT RAN STRONG. THOUGH NOT GREAT, SHE HAD KNOWN THE GREAT, IF SHE HAD NOT DONE THE THINGS, SHE HAD SEEN THEM DONE; HER TALK REVEALED A MATTER-OF-COURSE KNOWLEDGE OF SECRETS, A NATURAL INTIMACY WITH THE INACCESSIBLE. IT WAS LIKE HARRY TO SHOW NO SIGNS OF BEING IMPRESSED; BUT VERY SHREWD EYES WERE UPON HIM, AND HIS IMPASSIVITY MET WITH AMUSED APPROVAL SINCE IT STOPPED SHORT OF INATTENTION. SHE BROKE IT down at last by speaking of Addie Tristram.

"THE MOST FASONATING ORFATURE IN THE WORLD." SHE SAID. "I KNEW HER AS

THAT THE INTERVIEW MIGHT ASSUME A LESS FORMAL ASPECT. HARRY DECLINED THE COMPANY BUT YIELDED TO THE PLEA. HE WAS ANNOUNCED AS MR TRISTRAM. HE HAD JUST TAKEN STEPS TO ORTAIN A ROYAL I CRUSE TO BEAR

"Were you ever at Blent?" he asked.
"No, Mr Tristram."

HE FROWNED FOR A MOMENT, IT WAS ODD NOT TO BE ABLE TO ASK PEOPLE THERE, JUST TOO AS HE WAS AWAKING TO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THERE WERE in the world worth asking.

A LITTLE GIRL. I KNEW HER UP TO THE TIME OF YOUR BIRTH ALMOST. AFTER THAT SHE HARDLY LEFT BLENT, DID SHE? AT LEAST SHE NEVER CAME TO LONDON. YOU

IN the world worth asking.

"There never was anybody in the world like her, and there never will be," Lady Evenswood went on.

"I used to think that; but I was wrong," The smile that Mina Zabrska

knew came on his face.
"You were wrong? Who's like her then?"

travelled. I know."

ou were wrong? who's like her then?

"Her successor. My cousin Cecily's very like her."

on the back; he had avoided so entirely any hesitation or affectation in naming his cousin—Addie Tristram's successor who had superseded him.

"SHE TALKS AND MOVES AND SITS AND LOOKS AT YOU IN THE SAME WAY. I WAS AMAZED TO SEE IT." HE HAD SAID NOT A WORD OF THIS TO ANYBODY SINCE HE LEFT BLENT. LADY EVENSWOOD, STUDYING HIM VERY CUROUSLY,

LADY EVENSWOOD WAS MORE STRUCK BY THE WAY HE SPOKE THAN BY THE MEANING OF WHAT HE SAID. SHE WANTED TO SAY "BRAVO," AND TO PAT HIM

what lay behind her visitor's composed face; there was a hint of things SUPPRESSED IN HIS VOICE. BUT HE HAD THE BRIDLE ON HIMSELF AGAIN IN A moment. "Very curious these likenesses are," he ended with a shrug. SHE DECIDED THAT HE WAS REMARKABLE, FOR A BOY OF HIS AGE, BRED IN THE COLUMBY, ASTONISHING, SHE HAD LEAD HER BATHER DESCRIBE PIT AT TWANTY.

BEGAN TO MAKE CONJECTURES ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE AFFAIR. ALSO ABOUT

SHE DECIDED THAT HE WAS REMARKABLE, FOR A BOY OF HIS AGE, BRED IN THE COUNTRY, ASTONISHING, SHE HAD HEARD HER FATHER DESCRIBE PITT AT TIMENTY-ONE AND BYRON AT BEHEIBN. WITHOUT MAKING ABSURD COMPARISONS, THERE WAS, ALL THE SAME, SOMETHING OF THAT PRECOCITY OF MAN. HOOD HERE, SOMETHING ALL SO, OF THE ARROCANCE THAT THE GREAT MEN. HAD EXHIBITED.

She was very glad that she had sent for him.

"I DON'T WANT TO BE IMPERTINENT," SHE SAID (SHE HAD NOT MEANT TO MAKE
EVEN THIS MUCH APOLOGY), "BUT PERHAPS AN OLD WOMAN MAY TELL YOU THAT
she is very sorry for—for this turn in your fortunes, Mr Tristram."

She is very sorry for—for this turn in your fortunes, Mr I ristram."

"YOU'RE VERY KIND. IT WAS ALL MY OWN DOING, YOU KNOW. NOBODY COULD have touched me."

"BUT THAT WOULD HAVE MEANT ——?" SHE EXCLAIMED, STARTLED INTO candor.
"OU VES LIKACIAN STILL—BUT SINCE THINKS HAVE THENED OUT DISCREDATION."

"OH, YES, I KNOW. STILL—BUT SINCE THINGS HAVE TURNED OUT DIFFERENTLY, I needn't trouble you with that."

SHE SAW THE TRUTH, SEEMING TO LEARN IT FROM THE SET OF HIS JAW. SHE

INSISTED ON BRINGING IT EVEN INTO POLITICS. SHE WANTED TO HEAR MORE—
MUCH MORE NOW—ABOUT HIS SURRENDER, AND RECOGNIZED AS A NEW
TRIBUTE TO HARRY THE FACT THAT SHE COULD NOT QUESTION HIM. IMMEDIATELY
SHE CONCEIVED THE IDEA OF INVITING HIM TO DINNER TO MEET MR DISNEY;
but of course that must wait for a little while.

"Everything must seem rather strange to you?" she suggested.

"YES. VERY." HE ANSWERED THOUGHTFULLY. "I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT

ENUOYED A MAN WHO WAS NOT AFRAID TO DEFY THINGS, AND SHE HAD BEEN HEARD TO LAMENT THAT EVERYBODY HAD A CONSCIENCE NOWADAYS—NAY.

"What are you coing to do in the meantime, to produce that feeling?"
She was getting to the point she wished to arrive at, but very cautiously.
"I don't know vet. It's hard to choose."

SOME DAY I SHALL LOOK BACK ON MY BOYHOOD WITH DOWNRIGHT INCREDULITY. I

"You certainly won't want for friends."

"Yes, THAT'S PLEASANT, OF COURSE." HE SEEMED TO HINT, HOWEVER, THAT HE did not regard it as very useful.

shan't seem to have been that boy in the least."

"OH, AND SERVICEABLE TOO," SHE CORRECTED HIM, WITH A NOD OF WISE EXPERIENCE. "JOBS ARE FROWNED AT NOW, BUT MANY GREAT MEN HAVE STARTED BY MEANS OF THEM. ROBERT DISNEY HIMSELF CAME IN FOR A

STARTED BY MEANS OF THEM. ROBERT DISNEY HIMSELF CAME IN FOR A pocket-borough."

"Well. I really don't know." He repeated thoughtfully, but with no sign of

anxiety or fretting. "There's lots of time, Lady Evenswood."

"Not for me," she said with all her graciousness.

detained him.

HE SMLED AGAIN. THIS TIME CORDIALLY, AS HE ROSE TO TAKE LEAVE. BUT SHE

"You're on friendly terms with your cousin, I suppose?" "CERTAINLY, IF WE MEET, OF COURSE I HAVEN'T SEEN HER SINCE I LEFT BLENT, She's there, you know."

"No. I think it's best not to ask her to think of me just now."

"Have you written to her?"

She looked at him a moment, seeming to consider.

"Perhaps," she said at last, "But don't over-do that, Don't be cruel,"

"Cruel?" There was strong surprise in his voice and on his face.

"Yes, cruel. Have you ever troubled to think what she may be feeling?"

"I DON'T KNOW THAT I EVER HAVE." HARRY ADMITTED SLOWLY, "AT FIRST SIGHT IT

looks as if I were the person who might be supposed to be feeling."

"AT FIRST SIGHT, YES, IS THAT ALWAYS TO BE ENOUGH FOR YOU, MR TRISTRAM? IF so. I shan't regret so much that I haven't-lots of time."

"YES, I SEE, PERHAPS, I DARESAY I CAN FIND OUT SOMETHING ABOUT IT, AFTER

all. I've given some evidence of consideration for her."

He stood silent before her for several seconds.

"That makes it worse if you give none now. Good-by."

"It'S LESS THAN A FORTNIGHT SINCE I FIRST MET HER. SHE WON'T MISS ME MUCH. Lady Evenswood."

"TIME'S EVERYTHING, ISN'T IT? OH, YOU'RE NOT STUPID! THINK IT OVER, MR. TRISTRAM, NOW GOOD-BY, AND DON'T CONCLUDE I SHAN'T THINK ABOUT YOU

BECAUSE IT'S ONLY AN HOUR SINCE WE MET. WE WOMEN ARE CURIOUS. When you've nothing better to do it'll pay you to study us."

RAISED AGAIN BEFORE HIS EYES BY HER REFERENCE TO CECILY. THE BALANCE WAS TURNED IN FAVOR OF BLENT BY THE SIGHT OF A MAN WHO WAS ASSOCIATED. IN HIS MIND WITH IT-SLOYD. THE HOUSE-AGENT WHO HAD LET MERRON LODGE TO MINA ZABRISKA. SLOYD WAS AS SMART AS USUAL. BUT HE WAS WALKING ALONG IN A DEJECTED WAY. AND HIS HAT WAS UNFASHONABLY FAR

As Harry Walked Down From Her House In Green Street, His THOUGHTS WERE DIVIDED BETWEEN THE NEW LIFE AND THAT OLD ONE WHICH SHE HAD

back on his head. He started when he saw Harry approaching him. "Why it's——" he began, and stopped in evident hesitation. "Mr Tristram," said Harry, "Glad to Meet You, Mr Sloyd, though You

won't have any more rent to hand over to me." Slovd began to murmur some rather flowery condolences. Harry cut him short in a peremptory but good-natured fashion.

"MIGHT BE WORSE, MR TRISTRAM, I DON'T COMPLAIN, WE'RE A YOUNG FIRM AND WE DON'T COMMAND THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT OTHERS DO." HE LAUGHED. AS HE ADDED. "YOU COULDN'T RECOMMEND ME TO A GENTLEWAN WITH TEN thousand pounds to spare, could you, Mr Tristram?"

"How's business with you?" he asked.

"I know just the man. What's it for?" "No, no. Principals only," said Sloyd with a shake of his head.

"How does one become a principal then? I'll walk your way a bit." HARRY LIT A CIGAR; SLOYD BECAME MORE ERECT AND AMENDED THE POSITION OF HIS HAT: HE HOPED THAT A GOOD MANY PEOPLE WOULD RECOGNIZE HARRY.

Yet social pride did not interfere with business wariness.

"Are you in earnest, Mr Tristram? It's a safe thing."

"OH. NO. IT ISN'T. OR YOU WOULDN'T BE HUNTING FOR TEN THOUSAND ON THE

pavement of Berkeley Square."

"I'LL TRUST YOU," SLOYD DECLARED. HARRY NODDED THANKS, INWARDLY AMUSED
AT THE OBVIOUS EFFORT WHICH ATTENDED THE CONCESSION. "IF YOU DON'T
COME IN, YOU'LL NOT GIVE IT AWAY?" AGAIN HARRY NODDED. "IT'S A BIG
CHANCE. BUT WE HAVEN'T GOT THE MONEY TO TAKE IT. AND UNLESS WE CAN

"What'll happen if you don't?"
"I MUST SELL THE OPTION—RATHER THAN FORFET IT. YOU KNOW, I'VE AN OFFER FOR

TAKE IT WE SHALL HAVE TO SELL OUR RIGHTS. It'S AN OPTION ON LAND. I SECURED IT. BUT IT'S OUT IN A WEEK. BEFORE THEN WE MUST TABLE TWENTY THOUSAND.

And ten cleans us out."

it, but a starvation one."

AFTER A MOMENT'S SCRUTINY SLOYD WHISPERED A NAME OF IMMENSE significance in such a connection: "Iver."

"I SHOULD LIKE TO HEAR SOME MORE ABOUT THIS. IT'S WORTH SOMETHING. I

EXPECT, IF IVER WANTS IT. SHALL I GO WITH YOU TO YOUR OFFICE?" HE HALED A PASSING CAB. "I'VE GOT THE MONEY," HE SAID, "AND I WANT TO USE IT. YOU show me that this is a good thing, and in it goes."

An HOUR PASSED IN THE OFFICE OF SLOYD, SLOYD, AND GURNEY. HARRY
TRISTRAM CAME OUT WHISTLING. HE LOOKED VERY PLEASED; HIS STEP WAS
alert; he had found something to do the had made a heripping—good

TRISTRAM CAME OUT WHISTLING. HE LOOKED VERY RLEASED; HIS STEP WAS alert; he had found something to do, he had made a beginning—good OR BAD. IT LOOKED GOOD: THAT WAS BNOUGH. HE WAS NO LONGER AN IDLER OR MERELY AN ONLONGER. HE HAD BEGIN TO TAKE A HAND IN THE CAME.

MERELY AN ONLOCKER. HE HAD BEGUN TO TAKE A HAND IN THE GAME HIMSELF. HE FOUND AN ADDED, PERHAPS A BOYISH, PLEASURE IN THE FACT

that the affair was for the present to be a dead secret. He was against NER TOO IN A CERTAIN SENSE, AND THAT WAS ANOTHER SPICE, NOT FROM ANY

ILL-WILL, BUT BECAUSE IT WOULD PLEASE HIM ESPECIALLY TO SHOW IVER THAT HE COULD HOLD HIS OWN. IT COCURRED TO HIM THAT IN CASE OF A SUCCESS HE

COULD HOLD HIS OWN. IT COCURRED TO HIM THAT IN CASE OF A SUCCESS HE WOULD BYJOY GOING AND TELLING OLD LADY EVENSWOOD ABOUT IT. HE FELT, AS

TO HIDE. BECAUSE HE NEED NO LONGER BE ON THE WATCH? HE GAVE THIS IDEA A GOOD DEAL OF RATHER AMUSED CONSIDERATION, AND CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING IN IT. HE WENT TO THE THEATRE THAT NIGHT. TO THE PIT (WHERE HE WOULD NOT BE KNOWN). AND ENJOYED himself immensely. AND LADY EVENSWOOD HAD MADE UP HER MIND THAT SHE WOULD FIND A WAY OF SEEING MR DISNEY SOON, AND THROW OUT A CAUTIOUS FEELER. EVERYTHING WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE VERY CAREFULLY, ESPECIALLY IF THE MARRIAGE WITH THE COUSIN WERE TO BE MADE A FEATURE OF THE CASE. BUT HER RESOLVE, ALTHOUGH NOT ALTERED. WAS HAMPERED BY A CURIOUS FEELING TO WHICH HER TALK WITH HARRY HAD GIVEN RISE. THERE WAS NOW NOT ONLY THE VERY GRAVE CLESTION WHETHER ROBERT DISNEY—TO SAY NOTHING OF SOMEBODY ELSE-WOULD ENTERTAIN THE IDEA. THERE WAS ANOTHER, A MUCH LESS OBVIOUS ONE-WHETHER HARRY HIMSELF WOULD WELCOME IT. AND A THRO-WHETHER SHE HERSELF WOULD WELCOME IT FOR HM. HOWEVER. WHEN SOUTHEND NEXT CALLED ON HER. SHE PROFESSED HER READINESS TO ATTACK OR AT LEAST TO RECONNOTITE THE TASK FROM WHICH HE AND JOHN Fullcombe and the rest had shrunk.

HE SAID TO HIMSELF. VERY JOLLY. CARELESS AND JOLLY. MORE SO THAN HE REMEMBERED FEELING FOR MANY MONTHS BACK. SUPPRILY AN IDEA STRUCK HIM. WAS IT IN WHOLE OR IN PART BECAUSE THERE WAS NO LONGER ANYTHING

"There's only one thing he could think!" exclaimed Southend. "Oh. verv well." smiled Ladv Evenswood.

himself thinks about it."

A LONG LIFE HAD TAUGHT HER THAT ONLY FACTS CONVINCE, AND THAT THEY OFTEN fail

"Only." SHE SAID. "IF I WERE YOU. I SHOULD FIND OUT TOLERABLY EARLY—AS SOON AS WE KNOW THAT THERE'S ANY CHANCE AT ALL—WHAT MR TRISTRAM





XVII

River Scenes and Bric-à-Brac

THE BLENT WAS ON FIRE INDEED. AND MINA ZABRISKA OCCUPIED A POSITION RICH IN IMPORTANCE, PROLIFIC OF PLEASURE, OTHERS, SUCH AS IVER AND MISS S., MIGHT MEET MR GAINSBOROUGH AS HE TOOK TIMD RAMBLES: THEY COULD EXTORT LITTLE BEYOND A DAZED CIVILITY. OTHERS AGAIN, SUCH AS JANIE MER AND BOB BROADLEY, MIGHT COMFORT THEMSELVES WITH THE POSSESSION OF A SECRET AND THE CONVICTION THAT THEY TOO COULD PRODUCE A FAIR SENSATION WHEN THE APPROPRIATE (AND RESPECTABLE) TIME ARRIVED: FOR THE PRESENT THEY COMMANDED NO PUBLIC INTEREST. OTHERS AGAIN. THE MAJOR NOTABLY, STROVE AFTER IMPORTANCE BY AIRS OF PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE AND HINTS OF UNDISCLOSED DETAILS. EVEN MRS TRUMBLER MADE HER CAST, DECLARING THAT SHE HAD ALWAYS KNOWN (THE SOURCE OF THE INFORMATION WAS LEFT IN OBSCURITY) THAT PRIDE SUCH AS HARRY TRISTRAMS WAS THE SURE PRECURSOR OF A FALL. NONE OF THEM COLLD COMPETE WITH MINA ZABRISKA. To HER ALONE THE DOORS OF BLENT WERE OPEN: SHE HELD EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO ITS HIDDEN MISTRESS. THE FACT CAUSED UNIVEASURED INDIGNATION, THE REASON EXCITED UNRESTING CURIOSITY. THIS STATE OF THINGS ought to have made Mina very happy. What more could woman want? ONE THING ONLY, BUT THAT A NECESSITY—SOMEBODY TO TALK TO ABOUT IT. She had nobody. Janie showed no desire to discuss Blent or anything

INSTANCE, WAS ONE OF THE ENEMY. SHE MIGHT FITY HIM AS AN UNCLE—HE WAS PERFLEXED AND SURLY, BECAUSE SOMEHOW HE NEVER HAPPENED TO MEET MISS IVER NOW—BUT SHE COULD NOT CONFIDE IN HIM. THE GOSSIPS OF

OR ANYBODY CONNECTED THEREWITH, AND WITH JANIE OUT OF THE QUESTION THERE WAS NOBODY TO WHOM LOYALTY ALLOWED HER TO TALK. THE MAJOR, FOR on a visit to town! YET THINGS NEEDED TALKING ABOUT, HAMMERING OUT, THE LIGHT OF ANOTHER MIND THROWN UPON THEM: FOR THEY WERE VERY DIFFICULT. THERE WAS NO NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF MR GAINSBOROUGH: AS LONG AS HE COULD BE KEPT IN THE LIBRARY AND OUT OF THE ONE CURIOSITY-SHOP WHICH WAS TO BE FOUND IN BLENTMOUTH. HE COULD NOT DO HIMSELF OR THE HOUSE MUCH HARM.

BLENTMOLITH WERE BENEATH HER LORDLY NOTICE. SHE WAS BLIBBLING OVER WITH UNDISCUSSED IMPRESSIONS. AND NOW EVEN MR NEED IN HAD GONE OFF

THERE WAS NOTHING TO SEE ABOUT—THE LAWYERS HAD DONE IT ALL—AND HE WAS NO MORE NECESSARY OR IMPORTANT IN LONDON THAN HE WAS AT BLENT. BUT CECLY'S CASE WAS ANOTHER MATTER ALTOGETHER. AND IT WAS ABOUT HER THAT MINA DESIRED THE ENLIGHTENING CONTACT OF MIND WITH MIND. IN ORDER TO CANVASS AND EXPLAIN THE INCONGRUITIES OF A BEHAVIOR WHICH conformed to no rational or consistent theory.

HE WAS STILL BEWILDERED. BUT BY NO MEANS UNHAPPY. AND HE TALKED CONSTANTLY OF GOING BACK TO TOWN TO SEE ABOUT EVERYTHING-TO-MORROW.

CECILY HAD ACQUIESCED IN ALL THE LAWYERS DID. HAD SIGNED PAPERS AT REQUEST, HAD ALLOWED HERSELF TO BE INVESTED WITH THE PROPERTY. SALUTED WITH THE TITLE, BNTHRONED IN THE FULLEST MANNER. SO FAR THEN SHE HAD

ACCEPTED HER COUSIN'S SACRIFICE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF HER OWN LIFE. Yet through and in spite of all this she maintained, even to the extreme OF PUNCTILIOUSNESS. THE AIR OF BEING A VISITOR AT BLENT. SHE WAS NOT EXACTLY APOLOGETIC TO THE SERVANTS, BUT SHE THANKED THEM PROFUSELY FOR

ANY SPECIAL PERSONAL SERVICE THEY MIGHT PERFORM FOR HER: SHE MADE NO CHANGES IN THE ORDER OF THE HOUSEHOLD: WHEN MINA-ALWAYS BUSY IN

HER FRIEND'S INTEREST-SUGGESTED RE-ARRANGEMENT OF FURNITURE OR OF CURIOS. CECILY'S MANNER IMPLIED THAT SHE WAS PREPARED TO TAKE NO

SLICH LIBERTIES IN ANOTHER MAN'S HOUSE. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ALL VERY WELL-

BRED IF HARRY HAD BUT HIS HOUSE AT HER DISPOSAL FOR A FORTNIGHT. SEEING THAT THE PLACE WAS HER OWN AND THAT SHE HAD ACCEPTED IT AS BEING HER

OWN. MINA DECLARED THAT HER CONDUCT WAS LITTLE LESS THAN AN ABSURDITY. THIS ASSERTION WAS LIMITED TO MINA'S OWN MIND; IT HAD NOT BEEN MADE

CECLY AS HAD RUN IN ADDIE TRISTRAMS VEINS. ON THE OTHER HAND THE GAINSPOROLICHS SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN ORDINARY. WAS THIS PERIOD OF INDECISION OR OF SUSPENDED ACTION A TIME OF STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TRISTRAM IN CECILY AND THE GAINSBOROLICH? MINA ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR ENTERTAINMENT. HAD NO DOUBT WHICH OF THE TWO SHE WISHED TO BE VICTORIOUS: THE GAINSBOROUGH PROMSED NOTHING. THE TRISTRAM—WELL— EFFECTS! THE STRAIN MADE MINA EXCITED, RESTLESS, AND AT TIMES exceedingly short with Major Duplay. THE NEIGHBORHOOD WAITED TOO, BUT FOR THE END OF LADY TRISTRAMS MOURNING. NOT OF HER INDECISION, AS A RESULT OF MUCH DISCUSSION. BASED ON MANY RUMORS AND AN INCREDIBLE NUMBER OF AUTHENTIC REPORTS.

TO THE OFFENDER HERSELF. THE FEAR SHE HAD FELT OF HARRY THREATENED TO SPREAD TO HIS SUCCESSOR: SHE DID NOT FEEL FOUAL TO A REMONSTRANCE. BUT SHE GREW GRADUALLY INTO A STATE OF EXTREME IRRITATION AND IMPATIBNCE. THIS PROVISIONAL. THIS OSTENTATIOUSLY PROVISIONAL. ATTITUDE COULD NOT BE MAINTAINED PERMANENTLY. SOMETHING MUST HAPPEN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER NOW WHAT WAS IT TO BE? SHE COULD NOT PRETEND TO GUESS. THESE TRISTRAMS WERE ODD FOLK. THERE WAS THE SAME BLOOD IN

BLENT WAS TO PAY A NEW HOWAGE TO THE PROPRIETIES. MISS SWINKERTON. WAS STRONGLY OF OPINION THAT BYGONES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BE BYGONES, AND WAS AUTHOR OF A THEORY WHICH FOUND MUCH ACCEPTANCE AMONG THE VILLAS—NAMELY. THAT LADY TRISTRAM WOULD CONSIDER ANY REFERENCE TO HER IMMEDIATE PREDECESSOR AS INCONSIDERATE. INDEED INDELICATE. AND NOT SUCH AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO PROCEED FROM LADYlike mouths.

IT WAS SETTLED THAT AT THE END OF SIX MONTHS BLENT WAS TO BE THROWN. OPEN. VISITORS RECEIVED. AND A BIG HOUSE-WARMING GIVEN. A NEW ERA WAS TO BEGIN. SPLENDOR AND RESPECTABILITY WERE TO LIE DOWN TOGETHER.

"WE MUST REMEMBER THAT SHE'S A GIRL, MY DEAR" MISS S. OBSERVED TO

Mrs Trumbler. "SHE MUST KNOW ABOUT IT." MRS TRUMBLER SUGGESTED. "BUT I DARE SAY "IF SUCH A THING HAD HAPPENED IN MY FAMILY, I SHOULD CONSIDER MYSELF personally affronted by any reference to the persons concerned."

"THE VICAR SAYS HE'S SADLY AFRAID THAT THE NOTIONS OF THE UPPER CLASSES on such subjects are very lax."

vou're right. Miss Swinkerton."

THE VICAR. "AND AS ISAY, MY DEAR, SHE'S A GIRL. THE BALL WILL MARK A NEW DEPARTURE. I SAID SO TO MADAME ZABRISKA AND SHE QUITE AGREED WITH ME."

"NOT AT ALL." SAID MISS S. TARTLY. REALLY SHE NEEDED NO INSTRUCTION FROM

been a widow some time?" she remarked.
"I have never inquired," said Miss S. with an air of expecting applause

MRS TRIMBLER FROMNED PENSIVELY. "I SLEPPOSE MADAME ZARRISKA HAS.

for a rare discretion.

"I wonder what Mr Harry will do! The Vicar says he must be terribly

upset."

"OH, I NEVER PROFESSED TO UNDERSTAND THAT YOUNG MAN. ALL I KNOW IS THAT he's going abroad."

"Abroad?"

"Yes, MY DEAR I HEARD IT IN THE TOWN, AND MADAME ZABRISKA SAID SHE
had no doubt it was correct."

"But surely Madame Zabriska doesn't correspond——?"
"I DON'T KNOW, MY DEAR I KNOW WHAT SHE SAID." SHE LOOKED AT MRS
TRUMBLER AND WENT ON WITH EMPHASIS: "IT DOESN'T DO TO JUDGE

FORBISHER AND WENT ON WITH EMPHASIS: "IT DOESN'T DO TO JUDGE FORBISHERS AS WE SHOULD JUDGE OURSELVES. IF I CORRESPONDED WITH MR

TRISTRAM IT WOULD BE ONE THING; IF MADAME ZABRISKA—AND TO BE SURE

SHE HAS NOBODY TO LOOK AFTER HER; THAT MAJOR IS NO BETTER THAN ANY SILLY

hasn't got a penny piece, my dear." "So I HEARD." AGREED MRS TRUMBLER. "I SUPPOSE THEY WON'T LET HIM. starve " "OH, ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE IN SUCH CASES," NODDED MISS S. "BUT OF COURSE NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT THEM. FOR MY PART I SHALL NEVER MENTION. either Mr Tristram or the late Lady Tristram to her present ladyship." MRS TRUMBLER WAS SILENT FOR A WHILE, AT LAST HER MOUTH SPOKE THE thoughts of her heart. "I SUPPOSE SHE'LL BE THINKING OF MARRYING SOON, BUT I DON'T KNOW anybody in the neighborhood——" "My dear, she'll have her house in town in the season. The only reason THE LATE LADY TRISTRAM DIDN'T DO SO WAS ----- WELL, YOU CAN SEE THAT FOR vourself. Mrs Trumbler!" "WHAT MUST THE IVERS THINK ABOUT IT! WHAT AN ESCAPE! HOW providential!" "Let us hope it'll be a lesson to Janie. If I had allowed myself to think of position or wealth. I should have been married half a dozen times. Mrs Trumbler." "I DARE SAY YOU WOULD." SAID FAITHFUL MRS TRUMBLER. BUT THIS ASSENT DID NOT PREVENT HER FROM REMARKING TO THE VICAR THAT MISS S. SOMETIMES TALKED OF THINGS WHICH NO LINWARRIED WOWAN COULD BE EXPECTED REALLY to understand. IT WILL BE OBSERVED THAT THE IMP HAD BEEN ALLEVIATING THE PANGS OF HER OWN PERPLEXITY BY A DEXTEROUS MINISTERING TO THE DELUSIONS OF OTHERS. NOT FOR THE WORLD WOULD SHE HAVE CONTRADICTED MISS S.'S ASSERTIONS:

SHE WOULD AS SOON HAVE THOUGHT OF GIVING THAT LADY A PLAIN AND

YOUNG MAN—CHOOSES TO DO SO, IT'S QUITE ANOTHER ALL I SAY IS THAT, SO FAR AS BLENT IS CONCERNED. THERE'S AN END OF MR TRISTIRAM. WHY. HE MR GAINSBOROUGH, WHO WAS DRIVEN FROM BLENTIMOUTH AND THE CURIOSITY SHOP BY THE SHEER TERROR OF ENCOUNTERING LADIES FROM VILLAS WHO TOLD him all about what his daughter was going to do. THE OUTBREAK CAME, AND IN A FASHION AS TRISTRAM-ESQUE AS MINA COULD DESIRE. FOR ALL THAT THE HARBINGER OF IT WAS FRIGHTENED LITTLE MR GAINSBOROUGH, MORE FRIGHTENED STILL. HE CAME UP THE HILL ONE EVENING ABOUT SIX. PRAYING MINA'S IMMEDIATE PRESENCE AT BLENT. SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED. HE EXPLAINED. AS THEY WALKED DOWN, CECILY HAD HAD A LETTER-FROM SOMEBODY IN LONDON, NO. NOT HARRY, SHE MUST SEE MINA AT ONCE. THAT WAS ALL HE KNEW. EXCEPT THAT HIS DAUGHTER WAS PERTURBED. AND EXCITED. HIS MANNER PROTESTED AGAINST THE WHOLE THING WITH A MILD. despair. "Quick, quick!" CRIED THE IMP, ALMOST MAKING HIM RUN TO KEEP UP WITH her impatient strides. Cecily was in her room—the room that had been Addie Tristram's. "You've moved in here!" was Mina's first exclamation.

unvarnished account of the late Monsieur Zabriska's very ordinary and QUITE REPUTABLE LIFE AND DEATH. NO DOUBT SHE WAS RIGHT. BOTH SHE AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAD TO WAIT, AND HER EFFORTS DID SOMETHING TO MAKE THE PERIOD MORE BEARABI E FOR BOTH OF THEM. THE ONLY SUFFERER WAS BOOK

LETTER WHICH SHE HAD IN HER HAND. "DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING OF LORD Southend?" she asked.
"I've heard Mr Iver and Mr Neeld speak of him. That's all."

"Yes; the housekeeper said I must, so I did. But ——" She glanced up For a moment at Addie's picture and broke off. Then she held up a

"Tve neard Mr wer and Mr Neeld speak of nim. I nat's all."
"He writes to say he knew Laby Tristram and—and Harry, and hores

he'll know me soon."

"THAT'S VERY FRIENDLY." MINA THOUGHT, BUT DID NOT ADD, THAT IT WAS RATHER

Unimportant.

"YES, BUT IT'S MORE THAN THAT. DON'T YOU SEE? IT'S AN OPENING." SHE LOCKED AT HER FRIEND, IMPATIENT AT HER WANT OF COMPREHENSION. "IT makes it possible to do something. I can begin now."

"Begin what?" Mina was enjoying her own bewilderment keenly.

"HOW LONG DID YOU THINK I COULD STAND IT? I'M NOT MADE OF—OF—OF

"HOW LONG DID YOU THINK I COULD STAND 11? IM NOT MADE OF—OF—OF SOAP! YOU KNOW HARRY! YOU LIKED HIM, DIDN'T YOU? AND YOU KNEW LADY Tristram! I've slept in this room two nights and——"

Tristram! I've siept in this room two nights and——"
"You haven't seen a ghost?"
"Ghost! Oh. Don't be silly. I've LAIN HERE AWAKE. LOOKING AT THAT PICTURE.

AND IT'S LOOKED AT ME-AT LEAST IT SEEMED TO "WHAT ARE YOU DOING

here?' That's what it's been saying. 'What are you doing here?' No, I'm NOT MAD. THAT'S WHAT I WAS SAYING MYSELF. BUT THE FICTURE SEEMED TO say it."

THERE WAS A MOST SATISFACTORY ABSENCE OF GAINSBOROUGH ABOUT ALL

this.
"Then I GO INTO THE LONG GALLERY! It'S NO BETTER THERE!" HER HANDS WERE
flund out despairingly

flung out despairingly. "You seemed to have settled down so well," murmured Mina.

"Settled down! What was there to do? Oh, you know I hadn't! I can't bear it, Mina, and I won't. Isn't it hard? I should have loved it all so, if it had been really mine, if it had come to me properly. And now—it's worse than nothing!" She sat back in her chair with her face set in a desperate unhappiness.

"It is yours; it did come to you properly," Mina protested. Her sympathy tended always toward the person she was with, her sensitive mind responding to the immediate appeal. She thought "YOU SAY THAT?" CRIED CEOLY ANGRILY. "YOU, HARRY'S FRIEND! YOU, WHO FOUGHT AND LIED—YES, LIED FOR HIM. WHY DID YOU DO ALL THAT IF YOU THINK IT'S PROPERLY MINE? HOW CAN I FACE THAT PICTURE AND SAY IT'S MINE? IT'S A detestable injustice. Ah, and I did—I did love it so."

"WELL, I DON'T SEE WHAT YOU'RE TO DO. YOU CAN'T GIVE IT BACK TO MR. TRISTRAM. AT LEAST I SHOULDN'T LIKE TO PROPOSE THAT TO HIM, AND I'M SURE he wouldn't take it. Why, he couldn't, Cecily!"

MORE OF CECILY NOW THAN OF HARRY. WHO WAS SOMEWHERE—VAGUELY

somewhere—in London

ended.

"LORD SOUTHEND SAYS HE'D BE GLAD TO MAKE MY ACQUAINTANCE AND have a talk."

"Ask him down here then."

"No. no. no." she said fretfully. She turned abruptly round to Mina.

Cecily rose and walked restlessly to the window.

"Ask him here? I'm not going to ask people to stay here."
"I think that's rather absurd." Mina had needed to summon up courage for this remark.

"AND HE SAYS —— THERE, LOOK AT THIS LETTER. HE SAYS HE'S SEEN HARRY AND HOPES TO BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING FOR HIM. WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY THAT?" SHE CAME BACK TOWARD MINA. "THERE MUST BE SOMETHING DOSSIBLE IF he says that."

"He can't mean anything about—about Blent. He means——"

"I MUST FIND OUT WHAT HE MEANS. I MUST SEE HIM. THE LETTER CAME WHEN I WAS JUST DESPERATE. FATHER AND I SITTING DOWN HERE TOGETHER DAY AFTER

WAS JUST DESPERATE. HATHER AND I SITTING DOWN HERE TOGETHER DAY AFTER
DAY! AS IF ——! AS IF——!" SHE RAUSED AND STRUGGLED FOR SELF-CONTROL
"THERE. I'M GOING TO BE QUITE CALM AND REASONABLE ABOUT IT." SHE

APPROACH TO THE CALM WHICH SHE HAD PROMISED; BUT IT SEEMED THE quiet of despair. Here Mina had her theory ready and advanced it with confidence. "I expect he hates you. You see he did what he did in a movent of EXCITEMENT: HE MUST HAVE BEEN WROUGHT UP BY SOMETHING-SOMETHING quite unusual with him. You brought it about somehow."

"Yes, I know I did. Do you suppose I haven't thought about that?" "THERE'S SURE TO HAVE BEEN A REACTION." PURSUED THE SAGE IMP. "HE'LL HAVE GOT BACK TO HIS ORDINARY STATE OF MIND, AND IN THAT HE LOVED BLENT ABOVE EVERYTHING. AND THE MORE HE LOVES BLENT, AND THE SORRIER HE IS for having given it up, the less he'll like you, of course."

MINA HAD HER DOUBTS ABOUT THAT-AND WOULD HAVE BEEN SORRY NOT TO have them. The interest that had threatened to vanish from her life with ADDIE TRISTRAM'S DEATH AND HARRY'S DEPARTURE WAS REVIVED. SHE SAT LOOKING AT THE AGITATED GIRL IN A PLEASANT SUSPENSE. CECLY TOOK UP Southend's letter again and smoothed it thoughtfully. "What should YOU THINK HARRY MUST FEEL ABOUT ME?" SHE ASKED, WITH A NEARER

"You think he's sorry?" "When I've done anything on an implied like that, I'm always sorry." MINA SPOKE FROM A TOLERABLY LARGE EXPERIENCE OF IMPLUSES AND THEIR RESULTS: A VERY RECENT EXAMPLE HAD BEEN THE IMPULSE OF TEMPER WHICH

MADE HER DROP HINTS TO THE MAJOR ABOUT HARRY'S RIGHT TO BE TRISTRAM OF Blent.

"YES. THEN HE WOULD HATE ME." CECILY CONCLUDED, "AND HOW SHE'D HATE me!" she cried the next instant, pointing at Addie Tristram's picture.

ABOUT THAT AT LEAST THERE WAS NO DOUBT IN MINA'S MIND. SHE NODDED

emphatically.

EVERYBODY TALK ABOUT HER AGAIN! MINA, I FEEL AS IF I'D THROWN MUD AT HER. as if I'd reviled her. And she can't know how I would have loved her!" "I REMEMBER HER WHEN SHE THOUGHT HER HUSBAND WAS DEAD, AND THAT

"I'VE DONE WHAT SHE SPENT HER LIFE TRYING TO PREVENT! I'VE MADE

SHE COULD BE MARRIED ALL RIGHT TO CAPTAIN FITZHUBERT, AND—AND THAT IT would be all right, you know." "What did she say?" Cecily's eyes were on the picture.

"SHE CRIED OUT--'THINK OF THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES-THE ENORMOUS DIFFERENCE! I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT SHE MEANT THEN, BUT I REVIEWBER HOW

she looked and how she spoke." "And in the BND there is—no difference! Yes, she'd hate me, and so

MUST HARRY." SHE TURNED TO MINA. "IT'S TERRIBLY UNFAIR. ISN'T IT. TERRIBLY? SHE'D HAVE LIKED ME. I THINK. AND I'D GOT TO BE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS WITH HIM. I'D COME TO THINK HE'D ASK US DOWN NOW AND THEN-ABOUT ONCE A YEAR PERHAPS. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO ALL THE YEAR. IT WOULD HAVE MADE LIFE QUITE DIFFERENT, QUITE GOOD ENOUGH, YOU KNOW, I SHOULD HAVE BEEN SO CONTENT AND SO HAPPY WITH THAT, OH, IT'S TERRIBLY UNFAIR! WHY DO PEOPLE DO THINGS THAT—THAT BRING ABOUT THINGS like this?"

"POOR LADY TRISTRAM." SIGHED MINA, GLANCING AT THE BEAUTIFUL CAUSE OF the terrible unfairness. "She was like that, you see." she added. "YES, I KNOW THAT, BUT IT OUGHTN'T TO COUNT AGAINST OTHER PEOPLE SO. YES. it's terribly unfair."

THESE CRITICISMS ON THE ORDER OF THE WORLD, WHETHER WELL-FOUNDED OR NOT (TO MINA THEY SEEMED TO POSSESS MUCH PLAUSIBILITY), DID NOT ADVANCE MATTERS. A SILENCE FELL BETWEEN THE TWO. AND CECILY WALKED

AGAIN TO THE WINDOW. THE SUN WAS SETTING ON BLENT, AND IT GLOWED IN A soft beauty.

I'm going to London. Now—to-night. There's a train at eight."

The Imp sat up straight and stared.

"I SHALL WRE TO OUR HOUSE, THE MAID'S THERE, AND SHE'LL HAVE THINGS ready."

"To think that I should be here, and have this, and yet be very very Inhappy!" M RM Red the GRI. SOFTLY. She Faced Round Suddenly. "Mina.

"To see this Lord Southend. You must come with me."

"What are you going to town for?"

"I? Oh, I can't possibly. And your father——?"

"He must stay here. You must come. Run back and fack a bag; you won't want much. I shall go just as I am." With a gesture she indicated the flain black frock she wore. "Oh, I can't be bothered with facking! What does that matter? I'll call for you in the carrage at seven. We mustn't miss the train."

Mina gasped. This was Tristram indeed; the wild resolve was announced in tones calmer than any that Ceoly had achieved during the interview. Mina began to think that all the family must have this way of being reculiar in ordinary things, but quite at home when there was an opportunity of doing anything unusual.

"I JUST FEEL I MUST GO. IF ANYTHING'S DONE AT ALL, IT'LL BE DONE IN L'ONDON, not here." "How long do you mean to stay?"

"I CAN'T POSSIBLY TELL. TILL SOMETHING'S DONE. GO NOW, MINA, OR YOU'LL BE late."

"OH, I'M NOT COMING. THE WHOLE THING'S ABSURD. WHAT CAN YOU DO? And, anyhow, it's not my business." CHAIR: SHE WAS IN ADDIE TRISTRAM'S ATTITUDE. "BUT I SUPPOSE I HAVEN'T GOT ANY FRIENDS." SHE CONCLUDED. NOT IN A DISTRESSED FASHION. BUT WITH A pensive submissive little smile. "YOU'RE PERFECTLY ADORABLE." ORIED MINA, RUNNING ACROSS TO HER, "AND I'LL GO WITH YOU TO JERICHO. IF YOU LIKE." SHE CAUGHT CECILY'S HANDS IN HERS and kissed her cheek THE SCENE WAS TRANSFORMED IN AN INSTANT: THAT ALSO WAS THE TRISTRAM WAY. CEOLY SPRANG UP LAUGHING GAYLY, EVEN DANCING A STEP OR TWO, AS she wrung Mina's hands. "Hurrah! Marchons! En Avant!" she cried. "Oh. we'll do something. Mina! Don't you hate sitting still?" "Cecily, are you—are you in love with Harry?" "Oh, I hope not, I hope not," she laughed softly, "Because he must

"Very well. I Shall go alone. Only I thought you were interested in Harry." AND—AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY ERIEND" SHE THREW HERSELE INTO A

HATE ME SO. AND ARE YOU. MINA? OH, I HOPE NOT THAT TOO! COME, TO LONDON! TO SEEK OUR FORTUNES IN LONDON! OH, YOU TIRESOME OLD BLENT. how glad I am to leave you!" "But your father——"

"WE'LL DO THINGS QUITE NICELY. MINA DEAR. WE WON'T DISTRESS FATHER. WE'LL LEAVE A NOTE FOR HIM. MINA. I'M SURE ADDIE TRISTRAM USED JUST TO leave a note whenever she ran away! We'll sleep in London to-night!"

SUDDENLY MINA UNDERSTOOD BETTER WHY HARRY HAD SURRENDERED BLENT. AND UNDERSTOOD TOO. AS HER MIND FLEW BACK, WHY ADDIE TRISTRAM HAD MADE MEN DO WHAT THEY HAD DONE. SHE WAS CARRIED AWAY BY THIS

SUDDEN FLOOD OF ENRAPTURED RESOLUTION. OF A RESOLVE THAT SEEMED LIKE

limits of the possible.

AN INSPIRATION, OF DELIGHT IN THE UNREASONABLE, OF GAY DEFIANCE TO THE

OVERWHELMING FLOOD. CECLY CAUCHT HER BY THE ARM, A BURLESQUE apprehension screwing her face up into a fantastically ugly mask.

"It was the Gainsborough in Me!" she whishered, "Gainsboroughs can live on ouros! But I can't, Mina, I can't. I'm a Tristram, not a Gainsborough. No more could Harry in the end, no more could Harry!"

Mina was panting; she had danced and she had wondered; she was on the tip of the excitement with which Cecily had infected her.

"But what are we going to do?" she cried in a last protest of commonsense.

"OH, YES, YOU TIRESOME OLD BLENT!" ORIED CEOLLY, SHAKING HER FAIR HAIR TOWARD THE OPEN WINDOW. "HOW COULD A GIRL THINK SHE WAS GOING TO LIVE ON RIVER SCENES AND BRIC-Ä-BRAC?" SHE LAUCHED IN AIRY SCORN. "YOU must grow more amusing if I'm to come back to you!" she threatened.

RIVER SCENES AND BRIC-Ä-BRAC! MINA WAS SURPRISED THAT BLENT DID NOT ON THE INSTANT RI NISH THE RI ASSHENW BY A REVENCER IL FARTHOLIAKE OR AN

"OH, I DON'T KNOW, BUT SOMETHING—SOMETHING—SOMETHING," WAS THE not very common-sense answer she received.

IT WAS NOT THE MOMENT FOR COMMON-SENSE. MINA SCORNED THE THING AND FLUNG IT FROM HER. SHE WOULD HAVE NOVE OF IT—SHE WHO STOOD BETWEEN

BEAUTIFUL ADDIE THERE ON THE WALL AND LAUGHING CECILY HERE IN THE WINDOW, FEELING BY A STRANGE AND WELCOME ILLUSION THAT THOUGH THERE

WERE TWO VISIBLE SHARES, THERE WAS BUT ONE HEART, ONE SPIRIT IN THE TWO. ALMOST IT SEEMED AS THOUGH ADDIE HAD RISEN TO LIFE AGAIN, ONCE MORE TO CHARM AND TO DEFY THE WORLD. AN INEXPLICABLE IMPULSE MADE her exclaim:

"Were you like this before you came to Blent?"

A sudden quiet fell on Cecilv. She paused before she answered:

"No, not till I came to Blent." With a laugh she fell on her knees. "PLEASE FORGIVE ME WHAT I SAID ABOUT THE RIVER AND THE BRIG-À-BRAG. dear darling Blent!"

XVIII

Conspirators and a Crux

LORD SOUTHEND WAS DEVOTED TO HIS WIFE—A STATE OF FEELING NATURAL OFTEN, CREDITABLE ALWAYS. YET THE REASON PEOPLE GAVE FOR IT—AND GAVE WITH SOMETHING LIKE AN EXPLICIT SANCTION FROM HIM—WAS NOT A VERY EXALTED ONE. SUSANNA MADE HIM SO EXCEEDINGLY COMPORTABLE. SHE WAS BORN TO MANAGE A HOTEL AND CAUSE IT TO PAY PIFTEEN PER CENT. BEING A PERSON—NOT OF SOCIAL IMPORTANCE, NOTHING COULD MAKE HER THAT—BUT OF SOCIAL RAINK, SHE WAS PORCED TO RESTRICT HER GENIUS TO A COUPLE OF PRIVATE HOUSES. THE RESULT WAS LIKE THE LIGHT OF THE LAMPS IN THE HEROINE'S BOULDOR, A SOFT BRILLIANCY: IN WHOSE GLAMOUR SUSANNA'S PLAIN FACE AND LIMITED INTELLECTUAL INTERESTS WERE LOST TO VIEW. SHE WAS ALSO A PARTICULARLY GOOD WOMAN, BUT HER HUSBAND KNEW BETTER THAN TO TAILK ADOUGH THAT

BEHOLD HIM AFTER THE MOST PERFECT OF LUNCHES, HIS ARM-CHAIR IN EXACTLY THE RIGHT SPOT, HIS PAPERS BY HIM, HIS OGARS TO HIS HAND (EVEN THESE SUSANNA UNDERSTOOD), A SENSE OF PEACE IN HIS HEART, AND IN HIS HEAD A MILD WONDER THAT ANYBODY WAS DISCONTENTED WITH THE WORLD. IN THIS CONDITION HE INTENDED TO SPEND AT LEAST A COUPLE OF HOURS; AFTER WHICH SUSANNA WOULD DRIVE HIM GENTLY ONCE ROUND THE PARK, TAKE HIM TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS, WAIT TWENTY MINUTES, AND THEN LAND HIM AT THE IMPERIUM. HE LIT A CIGAR AND TOOK UP THE ECONOMIST, IT WAS NOT THE MOMENT for anything exciting.

"A lady to see you, my Lord—on important business."

EXCESSIVE COMFORT IS ENERVATING. AFTER A BRIEF AND FUTILE RESISTANCE HE

FOUND MINA ZABRISKA IN THE ROOM AND HIMSELE REGARDING HER WITH MINGLED CONSTERNATION AND AM ISEMENT. RELICS OF EXCITEMENT HING ABOUT THE IMP. BUT THEY WERE CONVERTED TO BUSINESS PURPOSES. SHE CAME AS AN AGENT. THE NAME OF HER PRINCIPAL AWOKE SOUTHEND'S immediate interest "She's come up to London?" he exclaimed.

Southend discovered his pince-nez and studied her thin mobile little

face. "And what have you come up for?" he asked after a pause.

"Yes, both of us. We're at their old home."

MINA SHRUGGED HER SHOULDERS. "JUST TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON." SHE SAID.

"I DARE SAY YOU WONDER WHAT I'VE GOT TO DO WITH IT?" HIS MANNER

seemed to assent, and she indicated her position briefly.

"Oh, that's it, is it? You knew the late Lady Tristram. And you

knew----" A GAIN HE REGARDED HER THOUGHTELLLY. "I HOPE LADY TRISTRAM. —the new one—is well?"

THERE WAS THE SOUND OF A WHISPERED CONSULTATION OUTSIDE THE DOOR! IT drew Mina's eves in that direction.

"THAT'S ALL RIGHT." HE SMLED. "IT'S ONLY MY WIFE SCOLDING THE BUTLER FOR having let you in. This is my time for rest."

"Rest!" exclaimed Mina rather scornellly. "You wrote to Cecily as ie

you could do something." "THAT WAS RASH OF ME. WHAT DO YOU WANT DONE? I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU from Iver, you know."

Mr. Tristram."

"OH, THE IVERS HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS, IT'S JUST BETWEEN CECLY AND

"And you and me, apparently."

"What was your idea when you wrote? I made Cecily let me come and SEE YOU BECAUSE IT SOUNDED AS IF YOU HAD AN IDEA." IF HE HAD NO IDEA, it was clear that contempt awaited him.

"I WANTED TO BE FRIENDLY. BUT AS FOR DOING ANYTHING—WELL, THAT HARDLY depends on me."

"But things can't go on as they are, you know," she said brusquely.

"Unhappily, as I understand the law——"

"OH, I UNDERSTAND THE LAW TOO—AND VERY SILLY IT IS. I SUPPOSE IT CAN'T BE changed?"

"GOOD GRACIOUS, MY DEAR MADAME ZABRISKA! CHANGED!" AND ON THIS

FOINT TOO! Nolumus leges Angliæ—— HE JUST STOPPED HIMSELF FROM the quotation.

"What are Acts of Parliament for?" Mina demanded.

"Absolutely out of the question," He LAUGHED. "EVEN IF EVERYBODY consented, absolutely."

"And Harry Tristram wouldn't consent, you mean?"

MINA LOOKED ROUND THE ROOM WITH A DISCONTENTED AIR, THERE IS SUCH A LAMENTABLE GULF BETWEEN FEELING THAT SOMETHING MUST BE DONE AND discovering what it is.

"Well, could any man?"

"I DON'T SAY POSITIVELY THAT NOTHING CAN BE DONE," HE RESUMED AFTER A
MOMENT, DANGLING HS GLASS AND LOOKING AT HER COVERTLY, "ARE YOU AT

MOMENT, DANGLING HIS GLASS AND LOOKING AT HER COVERTLY. "ARE YOU AT leisure this afternoon?"

"IF YOU'VE GOT ANYTHING TO SUGGEST." MINA HAD GROWN DISTRUSTFUL OF HIS

"I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO COME AND SEE A FRIEND OF MINE, WHO IS KIND BNOUGH TO BE INTERESTED IN HARRY TRISTRAM." HE ADDED. WITH THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF NAMING AN IMPORTANT PERSON. "I MEAN LADY Evenswood "

intelligence, and her tone showed it.

"Who's she?" asked the Imp curtly.

whether to mention their scheme.

TO DO THEM JUSTICE. ENGLISHMEN SELDOM FORGET THAT ALLOWANCES MUST. BE MADE FOR FOREIGNERS. LORD SOUTHEND EXPLAINED GRAVELY AND patiently.

"Well, Let's Go," SAID MINA INDIFFERENTLY. "NOT THAT IT SEEMS MUCH USE," her manner added "Exclise Me a MOMENT." SAID HE, AND HE WENT OUT TO SOOTHE HIS WIFE'S

alarm and assure her that he was not tired. As they drove. Mina heard more of Lady Evinswood—among other

THINGS. THAT SHE HAD KNOWN ADDIE TRISTRAM AS A CHILD; THIS FACT IMPRESSED THE IMP BEYOND ALL THE REST. BUT LADY EVENSWOOD HERSELF

MADE A GREATER IMPRESSION STILL. AN UNUSUAL TIMOTY ASSAULTED AND CONCIUERED MINA WHEN SHE FOLIND HERSELE WITH THE WHITE-HAIRED OLD LADY WHO NEVER SEEMED TO DO MORE THAN GENTLY SUGGEST AND YET EXERCISED. COMMAND. SOUTHEND WATCHED THEM TOGETHER WITH KEEN AMUSEMENT.

WHILE LADY EVENSWOOD DREW OUT OF MINA SOME ACCOUNT OF CECILY'S feelings and of the scene at Blent.

"Well, that's Tristram all over," sighed Lady Evenswood at the end.

"YES. ISN'T IT?" CRIED MINA, EMBOLDENED BY A SYMPATHY THAT SPOKE HER OWN THOUGHT. "SHE HATES TO FEEL SHE'S TAKEN EVERYTHING AWAY FROM HIM.

But Lord Southend says he can't have it back."

"Oh, No. No. MY DEAR, STILL -----" SHE GLANCED AT SOUTHEND, DOUBTFUL

"I DARE SAY LADY TRISTRAM WAS MOMENTARILY EXCITED," HE REMARKED TO MINA, "AND I THINK TOO THAT SHE EXAGGERATES WHAT HARRY FEELS. AS FAR AS I've seen him. he's by no means miserable."

"Well, she is anyhow," said Mina. "And you won't convince her that he isn't." She turned to Lady Evenswood. "Is there nothing to be bone? You see it's all being wasted."

"All being wasted?"

He shook his head slightly.

"YES, BLENT AND ALL OF IT. HE CAN'T HAVE IT; AND AS THINGS ARE NOW SHE can't enjoy it."

SOUTHEND

"Very perverse, very perverse, certainly." Murmured

frowning—although he was rather amused too.
"With AN OBVIOUS SOLUTION," SAID LADY EVENSWOOD, "IF ONLY WE LIVED IN
the realms of romance."

the realms of romance."
"I have suggested a Magician," Put in Scuthend. "Though he doesn't look much like one," he added with a laugh.

MINA DID NOT UNDERSTAND HIS REWARK. BUT SHE CAUGHT LADY

Evenswood's meaning.
"Yes." she said. "but Harry wouldn't do that either."

'Yes," she said, "but Harry wouldn't do that either."

"He doesn't like his cousin?"

"YES, I THINK SO." SHE SMILED AS SHE ADDED, "AND EVEN IF HE DIDN'T THAT mightn't matter."

THE OTHER TWO EXCHANGED GLANCES AS THEY LISTENED. MINA, INSPIRED BY a subject that never failed to rouse her, gained courage.

"Any more than it mattered with Miss Iver." She pursued. "And he MICHT JUST AS LIKELY HAVE GIVEN BURNT TO CECLY IN THAT WAY AS IN THE WAY HE ACTIVALLY DID-IF SHE'D WANTED IT VERY MUCH AND-AND IT HAD BEEN A splendid thing for him to do." LADY EVENSWOOD NOODED GENTLY. SOLITHEND RAISED HIS BROWS IN A SORT. of protest against this relentless analysis.

"Because that sort of thing would have appealed to him. But he'd never take it from her; he wouldn't even if he was in love with her." She ADDRESSED LADY EVENSWOOD ESPECIALLY, "YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?" SHE

asked. "He wouldn't be indebted to her. He'd hate her for that."

"Not very amiable." commented Southend. "Amiable? No!" Amiability seemed at a discount with the Imp.

"You know him very well, my dear?" "YES. I—I CAME TO." MINA PAUSED, AND SUDDENLY BLUSHED AT THE

REMEMBRANCE OF AN IDEA THAT HAD ONCE BEEN SUGGESTED TO HER BY Major Duplay. "And I'm very fond of her," she added.

"In the DEADLOCK," SAID SOUTHEND, "I THINK YOU'LL HAVE TO TRY MY

prescription, Lady Evenswood." "You think that would be of use?"

"It would pacify this pride of Master Harry's perhaps." Mina looked from one to the other.

"Do you mean there's anything possible?" she asked.

"My dear, you're a very good friend."

"I'M NOT VERY HAPPY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IN THE WORLD CECILY WILL DO. AND

vet----" Mina struggled with her rival impulses of kindness and

"THAT'S THE ONLY EXCUSE FOR ALL OF US, I SUPPOSE," SIGHED LADY Evenswood.
"Not that I like the boy particularly." added Southend.

CURIOSITY. "IT'S ALL AWFULLY INTERESTING." SHE CONCLUDED. BREAKING INTO A

smile she could not resist

which they were.

"Is THERE ANYTHING?" ASKED MINA. THE APPEAL WAS TO THE LADY, NOT TO Southend. But he answered chaffingly:

"Possibly—just possibly—the resources of the Constitution——"
THE BELL OF THE FRONT DOOR SOUNDED AUDIBLY IN THE MORNING-ROOM IN

"I DARE SAY THAT'S ROBERT," REMARKED LADY EVENSWOOD. "HE SAID HE might call."

"OH, BY JOVE" EXCLAIMED SOUTHEND WITH A LAUGH THAT SOUNDED A TRIFLE UNGESTS.

THE DOOR OPENED, AND A MAN CAME IN UNANNOUNCED. HE WAS OF MIDDLE HEIGHT, WITH LARGE FEATURES, THICK COARSE HAIR, AND A RATHER ragged beard; his arms were long and his hands large.

"How are you, Cousin Sylvia?" He said, crossing to Lady Evenswood, who gave Him Her Hand without rising. "How are you, Southend?" He turned back to Lady Evenswood. "I thought you were alone."

HE SPOKE IN BRUSQUE TONES, AND HE LOOKED AT MINA AS IF HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT SHE MIGHT BE DOING THERE. HIS AFFEARANCE SEEMED vaguely familiar to her.

"We are holding a little conference, Robert. This young lady is very interested in Harry Tristram and his affair. Come now, you revender about it! Madame Zabriska, this is Mr Disney."

THE OTHER TWO SMLED. MR DISNEY SCOWLED A LITTLE. OBVIOUSLY HE HAD hoped to find his relative alone.

"MADAME ZABRISKA MET ADDIE TRISTRAM YEARS AGO AT HEIDELBERG,

ROBERT, AND SHE'S BEEN STAYING DOWN AT BLENT—AT MERRICN LODGE, didn't you say, my dear?"

Mr Disney had sat down.

"OH, I—I—DON'T KNOW," MURMURED THE IMP IN FORLORN SHYNESS. THIS MAN
WAS—WAS ACTUALLY—THE—THE PRIME MINISTER! MATTERS WOULD HAVE

"Well, what's the young fellow like?" he asked.

"Mr Disney!" The Imp gasped, "You mean——?"

BEEN RATHER BETTER IF HE HAD CONSENTED TO LOOK JUST A LITTLE LIKE IT. AS IT WAS, HER HEAD WAS IN A WHIRL. LADY EVENSWOOD CALLED HIM "ROBERT" TOO! NOTHING ABOUT LADY EVENSWOOD HAD IMPRESSED HER AS MUCH AS that, not even the early acquaintance with Addie Tristram.

"Robert, don't frighten Madame Zabriska."

"Well then, what's the girl like?" asked Disney.

"Frighten her? What do you mean?"
"OH, TELL HM WHAT I MEAN, GEORGE," LAUCHED LADY EVENSWOOD, TURNING
TO SOUTHEND. MR DISNEY SEEMED GENUNELY RESENTIFUL AT THE IDEA THAT
he might frighten anybody.

"Are you a member of the conference too, Southend?"

"Well, yes, |—I'm interested in the family." He telegraphed a glange of caution to the old lady; he meant to convey that the present was not a

happy moment to broach the matter that was in their minds.

"I'M SORRY I NIERRUPIED. CAN YOU GIVE ME FIVE MINUTES IN ANOTHER ROOM.

Cousin Sylvia?" He rose and waited for her.

"Oh, but can't you do anything?" blurted out the Imp suddenly.

"EH?" His eyes under their heavy brows were fixed on her now. There
was a deep-lying twinkle in them Although he still from hed reproductly.

"Why, something for—for Harry Tristram?"

"Do what?"

HE LOOKED ROUND AT EACH OF THEM. THE TWINKLE WAS GONE, THE FROWN was not.

"OH, WAS THAT THE CONFERENCE?" HE ASKED SLOWLY. "WELL, WHAT HAS THE CONFERENCE DECIDED?" IT WAS MINA WHOM HE QUESTIONED, FOR WHICH SQUITHEND AT LEAST WAS PROFOUNDLY THANKFUL. "HE'D HAVE BITTEN MY HEAD

off, if the women hadn't been there," he confided to liver afterward.

MR DISNEY SLOWLY SAT DOWN AGAIN MINA DID NOT PERCEIVE THE

MR DISNEY SLOWLY SAT DOWN AGAIN. MINA DID NOT PERCEIVE THE significance of this action, but Lady Evenswood did.

"It's SUCH AN EXTRAORDINARY CASE, ROBERT, SO VERY EXCEPTIONAL! POOR

"YES. I REMEMBER ADDIE TRISTRAM." HE MUTTERED—"GROWLED." MINA

described it afterward. "Well, what do you want?" he asked.

Addie Tristram! You remember her?"

Lady Evenswood was a woman of tact.

"REALLY," SHE SAID, "IT CAN'T BE DONE IN THIS WAY, OF COURSE. IF ANYTHING
IS TO COME BEFORE YOU, IT MUST COME BEFORE YOU REGULARLY. I KNOW THAT,

"OH, NO," SHE CRIED. "DO LISTEN NOW, MR DISNEY. DO PROMSE TO HELP US

The Imp had no tact.

Robert."

now!"

Tact is not always the best thing in the world.

"If you'll tell me in two words. I'll listen." said Mr Disney. "I—I can't do that. In two words? Oh. but please——" He had turned away from her to Southend. "Now then, Southend?" LORD SOUTHEND FELT THAT HE MUST BE COURAGEOUS. AFTER ALL THE WOMEN were there "In two words? Literally?" DISNEY NODDED, SMILING GRIMLY AT MINA'S CLASPED HANDS AND IMPLORING face "LITERALLY—IF YOU CAN." THERE WAS A GRATUITOUS IMPLICATION THAT Southend and the rest of the world were apt to be loguacious. "WELL, THEN," SAID SOUTHEND, "I WILL, WHAT WE WANT IS ----" AFTER ONE GLANCE AT LADY EVENSWOOD, HE GOT IT OUT, "WHAT WE WANT IS-A viscounty." For a moment Mr Disney sat still. Then again he rose slowly. "Have I tumbled into Bedlam?" he asked. "IT WAS DONE IN THE BEARSDALE CASE." SUGGESTED LADY EVENSWOOD. "Of course there was a doubt there----" "Anyhow a barony—but a viscounty would be more convenient." murmured Southend. MINA WAS PLZZLED. THESE MYSTERIES WERE BEYOND HER. SHE HAD NEVER HEARD OF THE BEARSDALE CASE, AND SHE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY-IN. CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES—A VISCOUNTY WOULD BE MORE CONVENIENT. BUT SHE KNEW THAT SOMETHING WAS BRING LIRGED WHICH MIGHT MEET THE DIFFICULTY, AND SHE KEPT EAGER EYES ON MR DIS NEY, PERHAPS SHE WOULD

with a smile (was it not rather a grin?) of sardonic ridicule. "YOU MADE ME SPEAK, YOU KNOW," SAID SOUTHEND, "I'D RATHER HAVE waited till we got the thing into shape."

HAVE DONE THAT ANYHOW: MEN WHO RULE HEADS AND HEARTS CAN SURELY DRAW EYES ALSO. YET AT THE MOMENT HE WAS NOT INSPIRING. HE LISTENED

"And I should like you to see the boy. Robert." "Bedlam!" SAID MR DISNEY WITH SAVAGE CONVICTION. "I'LL TALK TO YOU

ABOUT WHAT I CAME TO SAY ANOTHER DAY, COUSIN SYLVIA, REALLY TOday----!" WITH A VAGUE AWKWARD WAVE OF HIS ARM HE STARTED FOR THE door. "You will try?" cried the Imp, darting at him.

SHE HEARD HIM SAY, HALF UNDER HIS BREATH, "DAMNED PERSISTENT LITTLE WOMAN!" BEFORE HE VANISHED THROUGH THE DOOR. SHE TURNED TO HER

COMPANIONS, HER FACE AGHAST, HER LIPS QUIVERING, HER EYES DIM. THE MAGICIAN HAD COME AND GONE AND WORKED NO SPELL: HER disappointment was very bitter.

TO HER AMAZEMENT SOUTHEND WAS RADIANT AND LADY EVENSWOOD WORE

an air of gratified contentment. She stared at them. "It went off better than I expected." said he.

"It must be one of Robert's good days," said she.

"But—but——" gasped the lmp.

spoken of the marriage."

"HE WAS VERY CIVIL FOR HIM. HE MUST MEAN TO THINK ABOUT IT, ABOUT SOMETHING OF THE SORT ANYHOW," SOUTHEND EXPLAINED. "I SHOULDN'T

wonder if it had been in his mind," he added to Lady Evenswood.

"NETHER SHOULD I. AT ANY RATE HE TOOK IT SPLENDIDLY. I ALMOST WISH WE'D

"He wouldn't read it, George."

"Telegraph then!"

"It would really be worth trying—considering how he took it." Lady Evenswood did not seem able to get over the Prime Minister's extraordinary affability.

"Well, if he treats you like that—great people like you—and you're pleased, thank coodness I never met him alone!" Mina was not shy with them any more; she had suffered worse.

They glanced at one another.

"It was you, my dear. He'd have been more difficult with us," said Lady Evenswood.

"Couldn't vou write to him?"

"Yes, if anything's been done, you've done it." They SEEMED QUITE SINCERSE. THAT FEELING OF BEING ON HER HEAD INSTEAD of her heels came over Mina again.

"You interested him." Southend assured her.

"I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he sent for Harry."

"No, nor if he arranged to meet Ceolly Gainsborough—Ceolly Tristram, I mean."

"I THOUGHT HE LOOKED—WELL, AS IF HE WAS HT—WHEN YOU MENTIONED Addie." "OH. THERE'S REALLY NO TELLING WITH ROBERT. IT WENT OFF VERY WELL INDEED.

What a lucky thing he came!"

STILL BEWLDERED, MINA BEGAN, ALL THE SAME, TO ASSIMLATE THIS

"Do you really think I—I had anything to bo with it?" she asked, a new pride swelling in her heart.
"Yes, ves, vou attracted his attention."

"He was amused at vou. mv dear."

atmosphere of contentment and congratulation.

"Then I'm GLAD." She MEANT THAT HER SUFFERINGS WOULD PERHAPS NOT GO unrecompensed.
"You must bring Lady Tristram to see me." said Lady Evenswood.

"Cecily? Oh—well, I'll try."

LADY EVENSWOOD SMLED AND SOUTHEND LAUCHED OUTRICHT. IT WAS NOT OUTE THE WAY IN WHICH LADY EVENSWOOD'S INVITATIONS WERE GENERALLY

received. But neither of them liked Mina less.

IT WAS SOMETHING TO GO BACK TO THE TINY HOUSE BETWEEN THE KING'S AND

FULHAM ROAD WITH THE RECORD OF SUCH ADVENTURES AS THESE. CECILY WAS THERE, LANGUD AND WEARY; SHE HAD SPENT THE WHOLE DAY IN THAT HAMMOCK IN THE STRIP OF GARDEN IN WHICH SLOYD HAD FOUND HER ONCE. DESPONDENCY HAD SUCCEEDED TO HER EXCITEMENT—THIS WAS ALL QUITE IN

DESPONDENCY HAD SUCCEEDED TO HER EXCITEMENT—THIS WAS ALL QUITE IN THE TRISTRAM WAY—AND SHE HAD EXPECTED NO FRUIT FROM MINA'S EXPEDITION. BUT MINA CAME HOME, NOT INDEED WITH ANYTHING VERY

DEFINITE, YET LADEN WITH A WHOLE PACK OF POSSIBILITIES. SHE PUT THAT POINT ABOUT THE VISCOUNTY, WHICH PUZZLED HER, FIRST OF ALL. IT ALONE WAS ENOUGH TO FIRE CECLY TO ANIMATION. THEN SHE LED UP, THROUGH LADY EVENSWOOD, TO MIR DISNEY HIMSELF, COMFESSING HOWEVER THAT SHE TOOK THE ENCOURAGEMENT WHICH THAT GREAT MAN HAD GIVEN ON FAITH FROM THOSE WHO KNEW HIM BETTER THAN SHE DID. HER OWN IMPRESSION WOULD.

HAVE BEEN THAT HE MEANT TO DISMISS THE WHOLE THING AS IMPOSSIBLE NONSENSE.

"STILL I CAN'T HELP THINKING WE'VE DONE SOMETHING," SHE BNDED IN

"Mina, are you working for him or for me?" THIS CLESTION FACED MINA WITH A LATENT PROBLEM WHICH SHE HAD HITHERTO

AVOIDED. AND NOW SHE COLLID NOT SOLVE IT. FOR SOME TIME BACK SHE HAD. BEEN FAMILIARIZED WITH THE FACT THAT HER LIFE WAS DILL WHEN HARRY TRISTRAM PASSED OUT OF IT. THE ACCEPTED EXPLANATION OF THAT STATE OF FEELING WAS SIMPLE ENOUGH. BUT THEN IT WOULD INVOLVE CECLY IN HER TURN PASSING OUT OF VIEW. OR AT LEAST BECOMING ENTIRELY INSIGNIFICANT. AND MINA WAS NOT PREPARED FOR THAT. SHE TRIED HARD TO READ THE ANSWER.

regarding Cecily earnestly the while.

hammock and fretfully smoothing her hair. "I'm a busy-body. That's it." said Mina.

"Mavn't I work for both of you?" she asked at last.

triumph.

"YOU KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF HE FINDS IT OUT? HARRY. I MEAN. HE'LL BE furious with both of us."

"Well, I can't see why you should do that," said Cecily, rolling out of the

MINA REFLECTED. "YES. I SUPPOSE HE WILL." SHE ADMITTED. BUT THE SPIRIT OF

SELF-SACRIFICE WAS ON HER. PERHAPS ALSO THAT OF ADVENTURE. "I DON'T

care." she said. "as long as I can help." THERE WAS A LOUD KNOCK AT THE DOOR. MINA RUSHED INTO THE FRONT ROOM

AND SAW A MAN IN UNIFORM DELIVERING A LETTER. THE NEXT MOMENT THE MAID BROUGHT IT TO HER—A LONG BWELOPE WITH "FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY" STAMPED ON THE LOWER LEFT-HAND CORNER, SHE NOTICED THAT IT WAS ADDRESSED TO LADY EVENSWOOD'S HOUSE, AND MUST HAVE BEEN SENT ON POST HASTE. SHE TORE IT OPEN. IT WAS HEADED "PRIVATE AND Confidential."

"MADAME—I AM DIRECTED BY MR DISNEY TO REQUEST YOU TO STATE IN

WRITING, FOR HIS CONSIDERATION, ANY FACTS WHICH MAY BE WITHIN YOUR KNOWLEDGE AS TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDANT ON THE MARRIAGE OF THE LATE LADY TRISTRAM OF BLENT, AND THE BIRTH OF HER SON MR HENRY AUSTEN FITZHUBERT TRISTRAM. I AM TO ADD THAT YOUR COMMUNICATION will be considered confidential.—I am, Madame, Yours faithfully,

BROADSTAIRS.

"Madame Zabriska."

"Ceoly. Ceoly!" Mina darted back and thrust this wonderful.

volume in her hand.

DOCUMENT INTO CEOLY'S HANDS. "HE DOES MEAN SOMETHING, YOU SEE, he will do something!" she cried. "Oh, who's Broadstairs, I wonder."

CEOLY TOOK THE LETTER AND READ. THE MP READERARED WITH A RED.

"Viscount Broadstairs—eldest son of the Earl of Ramsgate!" she read with wide-ofen eyes. "And he says he's directed to write, doesn't he? Well, you are funny in England! But I don't wonder I was afraid of Mr Disney."

"OH, MR DISNEY'S SECRETARY, I SUPPOSE. BUT, MINA ——" CECILY WAS ALIVE AGAIN NOW, BUT HER AWAK BNING DID NOT SEEM TO BE A PLEASANT one. She turned suddenly from her friend and, walking as far off as the

one. She turned suddenly from her friend and, walking as far off as the little room would let her, flung herself into a chair.

"What's the matter?" asked Mina, checked in her excited gayety.

"What will Harry care about anything they can give him without Blent?"

MINA FLUSHED. THE CONSPRACY WAS PUT BEFORE HER—NOT BY ONE OF THE

MINA FLUSHED. THE CONSPIRACY WAS PUT BEFORE HER—NOT BY ONE OF THE CONSPIRATORS BUT BY HER WHO WAS THE OBJECT OF IT. SHE REMEMBERED LADY EVENSWOOD'S QUESTION AND SOUTHEND'S. SHE HAD ANSWERED THAT IT MIGHT NOT MUCH MATTER WHETHER HARRY LIKED HIS COUSIN OR NOT. HE HAD NOT loved Janie Wer. Where was the difference?

anything about me to Mr Disney?"
"No," cried Mina eagerly.
"But they will, they mean to?" Cecily was leaning forward eagerly now.

"HE WON'T WANT ANYTHING IF HE CAN'T HAVE BLENT, MINA, DID THEY SAY

MINA HAD NO DENAL READY. SHE SEEMED RATHER TO HANG ON CEOLY'S WORDS THAN TO FEEL ANY NEED OF SPEAKING HERSELF. SHE WAS TRYING TO FOLLOW CEOLY'S THOUGHTS AND TO TRACE THE CAUSE OF THE APPREHENSION,

"He'll see it—just as I see it!" Cecily went on. "And, Mina——"

SHE PAUSED AGAIN. STILL MINA HAD NO WORDS, AND NO COMFORT FOR HER.
THIS SIGHT OF THE OTHER SIDE OF THE OLESTION WAS TOO SLIDDEN. IT WAS

HARRY THEN, AND HARRY ONLY, WHO HAD REALLY BEEN IN HER THOUGHTS: AND

the terror almost, that had come on the girl's face.

CECLY, HER FRIEND, WAS TO BE USED AS A TOOL. THERE MIGHT BE LITTLE GROUND FOR BLAMING SOUTHEND WHO HAD NEVER SEEN HER, OR LADY EVENSWOOD WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT IN PURELY IN HARRY'S INTEREST. BUT HOW STOOD MINA, WHO WAS CEOLY'S FRIEND? YET AT LAST A THOUGHT flashed into her mind and gave her a weapon.

"WELL, WHAT DID YOU COME TO LONDON FOR?" SHE CRIED DEFIANTLY. "WHY

did you come, unless you meant that too?"

Cecily started a little and lay back in her chair.

"OH, I DON'T KNOW," SHE MURMURED DESPONDENTLY. "HE HATES ME, BUT IF
HE'S OFFERED BLENT AND ME HE'LL—HE'LL TAKE US BOTH. MINA. YOU KNOW HE

WILL." AN INDIGNANT RUSH OF COLOR CAME ON HER CHEEKS. "OH, IT'S VERY

easy for you!" In a difficulty of that sort it did not seem that even Mr Disney could be of much avail.

"Oh, you Tristrams!" cried Mina in despair.

XIX

In the Matter of Blinkhampton

PITY FOR THE COMMANDER WHO, WHILE ENGAGING THE ENEMY ON HIS FRONT WITH VALOR AND SUCCESS, BREAKING HIS LINE AND DRIVING HIM FROM HIS POSITION, FINDS HIMSELF ASSAILED IN THE REAR BY AN UNEXPECTED OR DESPISED FOE AND THE PRIZE OF VICTORY SUDDENLY WRENCHED FROM HIM HIS FATE IS MORE BITTER THAN IF HE HAD FAILED IN HIS MAIN ENCOUNTER, HIS Self-reproaches more keen.

TRUMPH WAS NOT HIS ALTHOUGH HARRY TRISTRAM HAD FLED FROM THE BATTLE.

WER'S CAREFULLY GUARDED FRIENDLINESS AND THE TOUCH OF MOTHERLY
COMPASSION IN HIS WIFE'S MANNER, MRS TRUMBLER'S TACIT REQUEST

(CONVEYED BY A MEEK AND CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY) THAT HE SHOULD BOW TO
THE WILL OF PROVIDENCE. MISS S.'S MALIQUUS QUESTIONS AS TO WHERE HE

MAJOR DUPLAY WAS AWAKENING TO THE FACT THAT THIS WAS HIS SITUATION.

MEANT TO SPEND THE WINTER AFTER LEAVING MERRION, TOLD HIM THE OPINION OF THE WORLD. JANIE IVER HAD BEGUN TO THINK FLIRITATION WRONG; AND THERE WAS AN ALTOGETHER NEW AND REMARKABLE SELF-ASSERTION ABOUT BOB Broadley. The last thing annoyed Duplay most. It is indeed abourd that A YOUNG MAN, FORMERLY OF A COMMENDABLE HUMLITY, SHOULD THINK A CHANCE OF DEMEANDR JUSTIFIED MERRY BEYALDE ONE YOUNG WOMAN

A YOUNG IMAN, PORVERLY OF A CONVINCENDED HIST, SACOLD TRIME A
CHANGE OF DEMEANOR JUSTIFIED MERELY BECAUSE ONE YOUNG WOMAN,
HERSELF INSIGNIFICANT, CHOOSES FOR REASONS GOOD OR BAD TO FAVOR HIM.
DUPLAY ASSUMED TO DESPISE BOB; IT IS OFTEN BETTER POLICY TO DESPISE
PEOPLE THAN TO ENTIRE INTO COMPETITION WITH THEM, AND IT IS ALWAYS RASH
TO DO BOTH. THESE AND OTHER TRUTHS—AS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT FOR SOME
PUIPPOSES IT IS BETTER NOT TO BE FORTY-FOUR—THE MAJOR WAS LEARNING. WAS
THERE ANY GRAIN OF COMPORT? IT LAY IN THE FACT THAT HE WAS FORTY-FOUR. A

HYPOTHETICAL NOW IMPOSSIBLE YET SUBTLY SCOTTHING MAJOR OF THIRTY ROLLTED BOR BROAD BY AND CARRIED ALL BEFORE HIM. IN OTHER WORDS DURLAY WAS DRIVEN BACK TO THE LAST DITCH OF CONSOLATION. WHAT WE COULD HAVE DONE IS THE LATEST-TRIED PLASTER FOR THE WOUND OF WHAT WE CANNOT DO: IT would be wise to try it sometimes a little earlier. FROM THE ORTHODOX SENTIMENTALIST HE COLLD CLAIM NO COMPASSION. HE HAD LOST NOT HIS HEART'S LOVE BUT A VERY COMFORTABLE SETTLEMENT: HE WAS WOUNDED MORE IN HIS VANITY THAN IN HIS AFFECTIONS: HE HAD WASTED NOT HIS LIFE. ONLY ONE OF HIS FEW REWAINING EFFECTIVE SUMMERS. BUT THE MORE LAX, WHO BASE THEIR VIEWS ON WHAT MEN GENERALLY ARE, MAY SPARE HIM ONE OF THOSE LESS BITTER TEARS WHICH THEY APPROPRIATE TO THE MISFORTUNES OF OTHERS. IF THE TEAR AS IT FALLS MEETS A SMILE.—WHY NOT? SUCH ENCOUNTERS ARE HARDLY UNEXPECTED AND MAY WELL PROVE agreeable. THERE WAS ANOTHER DISCONSOLATE PERSON IN THE VALLEY OF THE BLENT— LITTLE MR GAINSBOROUGH. LEFT ALONE IN THE BIG HOUSE WITH A NOTE FROM HIS DALIGHTER COMMANDING HIM TO STAY THERE AND TO SAY NOTHING TO ANYBODY. HE WAS LONELY, AND NERVOUS WITH THE SERVANTS; THE CURIOS gave him small pleasure since he had not bought them, and, if he had,

THEY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN CHEAP. FOR REASONS BEFORE INDICATED. BLENTMOLITH AND THE CURIOSITY-SHOP THERE HAD BECOME TOO DANGEROUS. BESIDES. HE HAD NO MONEY: CECLY HAD FORGOTTEN THAT DETAIL IN HER HURRIED ELIGHT. A MAN CANNOT SPEND MORE THAN A PORTION OF HIS WAKING

HOURS IN A LIBRARY OR OVER PEDIGREES. GAINSBOROUGH FOUND HIMSELF REGRETTING LONDON AND THE LITTLE HOUSE. IF WE DIVIDE HUMANITY INTO THOSE

WHO DO THINGS AND THOSE WHO HAVE TO GET OUT OF THE WAY WHILE THEY ARE BEING DONE (JUST AS REASONABLE A DIVISION AS MANY ADOPTED BY

STATISTICIANS) GAINSBOROUGH BELONGED TO THE LATTER CLASS: LIKE MOST OF

US PERHAPS. BUT IN A PARTICULARLY UNMSTAKABLE DEGREE. AND HE KNEW

HE DID-NOT PERHAPS LIKE MOST OF US IN THAT. HE NEVER THOUGHT EVEN OF

appealing to posterity.

MEANWHILE JANIE IVER WAS BEHAVING AS A PATTERN DAUGHTER, CHERISHING HER MOTHER AND FATHER AND MAKING HOME SWEET. EXERCISING, IN FACT. THAT PRUDENT ECONOMY OF WILFULNESS WHICH PRESERVES IT FOR ONE GREAT DECISIVE STRUGGLE. AND SCORNS TO FRITTER IT AWAY ON THE DETAILS OF DAILY LIFE. GIRLS HAVE ADOPTED THESE TACTICS FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS (SO IT IS RECORDED OR MAY BE PRESUMED). AND WARY ARE THE PARENTS WHO ARE NOT HOODWINKED BY THEM OR. EVEN IF THEY PERCEIVE. ARE ALTOGETHER UNSOFTENED. JANIE WAS VERY SAINTLY AT FAIRHOLME, THE ONLY SINS WHICH SHE COULD HAVE FOUND TO CONFESS (NOT THAT MR TRUMBLER FAVORED CONFESSION—OUTE THE CONTRARY) WERE CERTAIN SUPPRESSIONS OF TRUTH TOLICHING THE DIRECTION IN WHICH SHE DROVE HER DOG-CART—AND EVEN THESE WERE CALCULATED TO AVOID THE GIVING OF PAIN. AS FOR THE TRISTRAMS storv. IVER NEEDED COMFORT. THERE IS NO DISGUISING IT. HOWEVER MUCH THE ADMISSION MAY DAMAGE HIM IN THE EYES OF THAT SAME ORTHODOX SENTIMENTALIST. HE HAD ONCE EXPOUNDED HIS VIEWS TO MR JENKINSON. NEELD (OR RATHER ONE OF HIS EXPOSITIONS OF THEM HAS BEEN RECORDED, THERE HAVING BEEN MORE THAN ONE)—AND THE PRESENT SITUATION DID NOT SATISFY THEM. AMONG OTHER REHABILITATIONS AND WHITEWASHINGS. THAT OF THE CRUEL FATHER MIGHT WELL BE UNDERTAKEN BY AN INCENIOUS WRITER: IF NERO HAD HAD A GROWN-UP DAUGHTER THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE CHANCE! ANYHOW THE ATTEMPT WOULD HAVE MET WITH SOME SYMPATHY FROM IVER. OF COURSE A MAN DESIRES HIS DAUGHTER'S HAPPINESS (THE REWARK IS A PLATITUDE), BUT HE MAY BE ALLOWED TO FEEL ANNOYANCE AT THE precise form in which it realizes—or thinks it will realize—itself. A SHAPE THAT MAY DISAPPOINT THE AIM OF HIS CAREER. IF HE IS PROVIDED WITH A SON, HE HAS THE CHANCE OF A MORE UNSELFISH BENEVOLENCE: BUT IVER WAS NOT. LET ALL BE SAID THAT COULD BE SAID—BOB BROADLEY WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT. IVER WOULD, IF PUT TO IT, HAVE PREFERRED DUPLAY. THERE WAS AT LEAST A COSMOPOLITAN POLISH ABOUT THE MAJOR: DRAWING-ROOMS

WOULD NOT AFFAL HIM NOR THE THOUGHT OF GOING TO COURT THROW HIM INTO A PERSPIRATION. IVER HAD BEEN KEEN TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT HARRY

WISHING THAT THE TRUTH HAD NEVER BEEN DISCOVERED BY THEM NOR FLUNG IN the face of the world by Harry himself.

"BUT DARLING JANE WILL BE HARPY," MRS IVER USED TO SAY. SHE HAD SURRENGED AND SURRENGED TO SAY. SHE HAD SURRENGED AND SURRENGED TO SAY. SHE HAD SURRENGED AND SAY. SHE HAD SURRENGED AND SAY. SHE HAD SURRENGED AND SAY. SHE HAD SOME BE HANGED!" IT WAS RATHER HIS WIFE'S ATTITUDE OF MIND THAT HAD BEEN HOPELESS FROM A PARENT'S POINT OF VIEW. HE WAS ACTUALLY A LITTLE TOUCHED BY MRS TRUMBLER'S WAY OF LOCKING AT THE WORLD; HE DID THINK—NAD CONFESSED IT TO JANE—THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING VIETY REMARKABLE IN THE WAY HARRY TRISTRAM HAD BEEN CLEARED FROM HIS PATH. HE WAS IN NO SENSE AN ADVANCED THINKER, AND PEOPLE IN LOVE ARE

TRISTRAM, AS KEEN AS MAJOR DUPLAY, AT THIS MOMENT BOTH OF THEM WERE

APT TO BELIEVE IN WHAT ARE CALLED INTERPOSITIONS. FURTHER, HE WAS PRIMITIVE IN HIS IDEAS; HE HAD WON THE LADY, AND THAT SEEMED TO HIM BHOUGH. IT WAS BNOUGH, IF HE COULD KEEP HER, AND IN THESE DAYS THAT REALLY DEPENDS ON HERSELF. MOREOVER HE HAD NO DOUBT OF KEEPING HER, HIS PRIMITIVENESS APPEARS AGAIN; WITH THE FIRST KISS HE SEEMED TO PASS FROM SLAVE TO MASTER. MANY GIRLS WOULD HAVE TAUGHT HIM BETTER. JANIE WAS NOT ONE. SHE SEEMED RATHER TO ACQUIESCE. BBING. IT MUST

TERRIBLY CLEAR TO IVER THAT THE PAIR WOULD STAND TO ONE ANOTHER AND SETTLE DOWN IN INCLORIOUS CONTENTIMENT TOGETHER FOR THEIR LIVES. YES, IT WAS WORSE THAN DUPLAY; SOMETHING MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE OF HIM. AS FOR HARRY—IVER USED TO END BY THINKING HOW SENSIBLE A MAN OLD MR NEELD was; for Mr Neeld had determined to hold his tongue.

BE PRESUMED. ALSO OF A SOMEWHAT PRIM. TIVE CAST OF MIND. IT WAS

THERE WAS ANOTHER VEXATION, OF A DIFFERENT KIND INDEED, BUT ALSO A CHECK IN HIS SUCCESS. BLINKHAMPTON WAS NOT GOING QUITE RIGHT.

BLINKHAMPTON WAS A PREDESTINED SEASIDE RESORT ON THE SOUTH COAST,
AND IVER, WITH CERTAIN ASSOCIATES, MEANT TO DEVELOP IT. THEY HAD
BOUGHT IT UP, AND LAID IT OUT FOR BUILDING, AND ARRANGED FOR A BIG HOTEL

TO BE-RAN A LONG NARROW STRIP. FORMING THE ESTATE OF AN ELDERLY GENTI FIVAN NAMED MASTERS. OF COURSE MASTERS HAD TO BE BOUGHT OUT, THE WHOLE SCHEWE HANGING ON THAT, IVER KEEN AT A BARGAIN HARD IN BUSINESS HOURS (HAD NOT MINA ZABRISKA DISCOVERED THAT?), CONFIDENT THAT NOBODY WOULD CARE TO INCUR HIS ENMITY—HE WAS POWERFUL—BY FORESTALLING HIM. HAD REFUSED MASTERS HIS PRICE. THE OLD GENTLEWAN WOULD HAVE TO COME DOWN. BUT SOME YOUNG MEN STEPPED IN. WITH THE RASHNESS OF THEIR YOUTH, AND ACQUIRED AN OPTION OF PURCHASE FROM MASTERS IVER SMILED IN A VEXED FASHION BUT WAS NOT DISMAYED. HE LET IT BE KNOWN THAT ANYBODY WHO ADVANCED MONEY TO THE YOUNG MEN-SLOYD, SLOYD, AND GURNEY WAS THE FIRM—WOULD BE HIS ENEMIES: THEN HE WAITED FOR THE YOUNG MEN TO APPROACH HIM. THEY DID NOT COME. AT last, pride protesting, prudence insisting, he wrote and suggested that THEY MIGHT PROBABLY BE GLAD TO MAKE AN ARRANGEMENT WITH HIM. MR SLOYD—OUR MR SLOYD—WROTE BACK THAT THEY HAD FOUND A CAPITALIST— NO LESS THAN THAT—AND PROPOSED TO DEVELOP THEIR ESTATE TO PUT UP THEIR OWN HOTEL, ALSO A ROW OF BOARDING-HOUSES, A CLUB, A

WITH BIRCH & COMPANY, THE FAMOUS FURNISHERS. BUT ALL ALONG IN FRONT OF IT—BETWEEN WHERE THE STREET NOW WAS AND THE ESPLANADE WAS SOON

SPEND ALL HIS TIME IN THE PENINSULA. THE TRANSACTION WAS IMPORTANT, YET HARDLY VITAL; BESIDES IVER HIMSELF COULD KEEP HIS EAR TO THE TELEPHONE. IT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BOB TO WIN HIS SPURS; IVER PROPOSED TO HIM TO go to town and act as his representative.

WINTER GARDEN, AND POSSIBLY AN AQUARIUM. YOUTH AND A SENSE OF ELATION CAUSED SLOYD TO ADD THAT THEY WOULD ALWAYS BE GLAD TO cooperate with other gentlemen interested in Blinkhampton.

WER HAD MANY IRONS IN THE FIRE, HE COULD NO MORE DEVOTE HIMSELF EXCLUSIVELY AND PERSONALLY TO BLINKHAMPTON THAN NAPOLEON COULD.

"I'M AFRAID YOU'LL LOSE THE GAME IF I PLAY IT FOR YOU, MR IVER," RESPONDED

BOB, WITH A SHAKE OF HIS HEAD AND A GOOD-HUMDRED SMILE. "I'M NOT

accustomed to that sort of job, you know."

husiness " "Well, you see, farming's my business. And I don't think I'm a fool at THAT. BUT BUILDING SPECULATIONS AND SO ON ——" BOB SHOOK HIS HEAD. again.

"IT WOULD BE A GOOD CHANCE FOR YOU TO BEGIN TO LEARN SOMETHING OF

humanity again.) "You've no desire for—for a broader sphere?" he asked. "WELL. I LIKE A QUIET LIFE. YOU SEE-WITH MY HORSES, AND MY CROPS, AND

THE PROGRESSIVE MAN GAZED IN WONDER AT THE STATIONARY. (WE DIVIDE

SO ON. DON'T BELIEVE I COULD STAND THE RACKET." SO FAR AS PHYSIQUE WAS CONCERNED. BOB COULD HAVE STOOD PENAL SERVITUDE AND A LONDON Season combined. "But it's an opening." Iver persisted, by now actually more puzzled.

THAN ANGRY. "IF YOU FOUND YOURSELF AT HOME IN THE WORK, IT MIGHT LEAD TO ANYTHING." HE RESISTED THE TEMPTATION TO ADD. "LOOK AT ME!" DID NOT Fairholme, its lawns and green-houses, say as much for him? "BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT I WANT ANYTHING." SMLED BOB. "OF COURSE I'LL HAVE

vou know."

JANIE WAS THERE IVER TURNED TO HER IN DESPAIR. SHE WAS SMILING AT BOB in an approving understanding way. "IT REALLY ISN'T WHAT WOULD SUIT BOB. FATHER" SAID SHE. "BESIDES. IF HE WENT INTO YOUR BUSINESS. WE SHOULD HAVE TO BE SO MUCH IN TOWN AND

hardly ever be at home at Mingham."

AT HOME AT MINGHAM! WHAT A DESTINY! CERTAINLY BLENT WAS IN THE same valley, but- Well, a "SEAT" is one thing, and a farms another;

THE WORLD IS TO BLAME AGAIN, NO DOUBT, AND WITH MEN WHO WANT NOTHING, FOR WHOM THE WORD "OPENING" HAS NO MAGIC, WHAT IS TO BE

AMBITIOUS MEN. JANIE. WHEN SHE HAD SEEN BOB. AN UNREPENTANT CHEERFUL BOB. ON HIS WAY. CAME BACK TO FIND HER FATHER SITTING sorrowful "Dearest father. I'm so sorry." She said. Putting her arms round his neck. HE SQUARED HIS SHOULDERS TO MEET FACTS: HE COULD ALWAYS DO THAT. MOREOVER HE LOOKED AHEAD-THAT POWER WAS ALSO AMONG HIS GIFTS-AND SAW HOW PRESENTLY THIS THING. LIKE OTHER THINGS. WOULD BECOME A matter of course "That's settled, Janie," said he, "I've made my last suggestion," SHE WENT OFF IN DISTRESS TO HER MOTHER, BUT WAS TOLD TO "LET HIM ALONE."

DONE? ARSTRACTLY THEY ARE SEEN TO BE A NECESSARY ELEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY: BUT THEY DO NOT MAKE GOOD SONS OR SONS-IN-LAW FOR

SIGHT OF A POSSIBLE SYMPATHIZER: HE MENTIONED TO THE MAJOR, WHO WAS HIS ANTAGONIST IN THE GAME. THAT IT WAS NOT OFTEN THAT A YOUNG FELLOW REFUSED SUCH A CHANCE AS HE HAD JUST OFFERED IN VAIN TO BOB BROADLEY. HIS PROSPECTIVE RELATIONSHIP TO BOB HAD REACHED THE STAGE OF BEING ASSUMED BETWEEN DUPLAY AND HIM. ALTHOUGH IT HAD NOT YET BEEN explicitly mentioned.

THE WISDOM OF WOMAN AND OF YEARS SPOKE, PRESENTLY IVER WENT OUT TO play golf. But his heart was still bitter within him; he could not resist the

"I WISH SOMEBODY WOULD TRY ME!" LAUGHED THE MAJOR. "I'M KICKING MY heels all day down here."

IVER MADE NO REPLY AND PLAYED THE ROUND IN SILENCE. HE LOST, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE WAS THINKING OF SOMETHING BLSE. HE LIKED DUPLAY. HE

THOUGHT HIM CLEVER, AND, LOOKING BACK ON THE HISTORY OF THE TRISTRAM

AFFAIR. HE FELT SOMEHOW THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO DO THE MAJOR A GOOD TURN. Were they not in a sense companions in misfortune?

TWO DAYS LATER DUPLAY SAT IN THE OFFICES OF SLOYD, SLOYD, AND GURNEY.

firm the exceeding folly of their conduct in regard to Blinkhampton. His READY BRAIN HAD ASSIMLATED ALL THE FACTS. AND THEY LOST NOTHING BY HIS ready tongue. He even made an impression on the enemy. "IT DOESN'T DO TO LOOK AT ONE TRANSACTION ONLY. MR SLOYD." HE REMINDED. THE SPRUCE BUT RATHER NERVOUS YOUNG MAN. "IT'LL PAY YOU TO TREAT US reasonably. Mr Iver's a good friend to have and a bad enemy."

AS IVER'S REPRESENTATIVE: HIS MISSION WAS TO REPRESENT TO THE YOUTHFUL

glanced at the clock. "WE RECOGNIZE THAT: WE OFFER YOU TWO THOUSAND POUNDS. WE TAKE OVER YOUR OPTION AND GIVE YOU TWO THOUSAND." THIS WAS THE FIGURE THAT IVER AND HE HAD DECIDED WOULD TEMPT THE YOUNG FIRM: THEIR FEAR OF THE GREAT

"I'M QUITE ALIVE TO ALL THAT: BUT WE HAVE OBTAINED A LEGITIMATE ADVANTAGE AND ---" SLOYD WAS EVIDBNTLY A LITTLE PUZZLED. AND HE

Mr Iver would make them content with that. SLOYD WAS HALF INCLINED TO BE CONTENT: THE FIRM WOULD MAKE A THOUSAND: THE BALANCE WOULD BE GOOD INTEREST ON THE CAPITALIST'S TEN THOUSAND POUNDS: AND THERE WOULD STILL BE ENOUGH OF A VICTORY TO

soothe the feelings of everybody concerned. "I'M EXPECTING THE GENTLEWAN WHO IS ASSOCIATED WITH US. IF YOU'LL excuse me. I'll step out and see if he's arrived."

DUPLAY SAW THROUGH THE SUGGESTION, BUT HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO PERMITTING A CONSULTATION. HE LIT HIS CIGAR AND WAITED WHILE SLOYD WAS AWAY. THE MALIOR WAS IN CREATER CONTENTMENT WITH HIMSELF THAN HE HAD. BEEN SINCE HE RECOGNIZED HIS DEFEAT. NEXT TO SUCCEEDING, IT IS

PERHAPS THE PLEASANTEST THING TO MAKE PEOPLE REGRET THAT YOU HAVE

NOT SUCCEEDED. IF HE PROVED HIS CAPACITY IVER WOULD REGRET WHAT HAD

HAPPENED MORE: POSSIBLY EVEN JANIE WOULD COME TO REGRET IT. AND HE WAS GLAD TO BE USING HIS BRAINS AGAIN. IF THEY TOOK THE TWO THOUSAND, IF IVER GOT THE MASTERS ESTATE AND ENTIRE CONTROL OF BLINKHAMPTON FOR BARGAIN. HE THOUGHT THE SLOYDS WOULD YIELD. "BE STRONG ABOUT IT." IVER HAD SAID. "THESE YOUNG FELLOWS HAVE PLENTY OF ENTERPRISE, PLENTY OF SHREWDNESS, BUT THEY HAVEN'T GOT THE GRIT TO TAKE BIG CHANCES. THEY'LL CATCH AT A CERTAINTY." SLOYD'S MANNER HAD GONE FAR TO BEAR OUT THIS opinion. Slovd returned, but, instead of coming in directly, he held the door and ALLOWED ANOTHER TO BASS IN FRONT OF HIM. DUPLAY JUMPED UP WITH A MUTTERED EXCLAMATION WHAT THE DELICE WAS HARRY TRISTRAM DOING there? Harry advanced, holding out his hand. "We NETHER OF US THOUGHT WE SHOULD MEET IN THIS WAY, MAJOR DUPLAY? THE WORLD'S FULL OF SURPRISES. I'VE LEARNT THAT ANYHOW, AND I DARE SAY vou've known it a long while." "YOU'RE IN THIS BUSINESS?" CRIED THE MAJOR, TOO ASTONISHED FOR ANY preamble. HARRY NODDED, "LET'S GET THROUGH IT." HE SAID, "BECAUSE IT'S VERY SIMPLE. SLOYD AND I HAVE MADE UP OUR MINDS EXACTLY WHAT WE OUGHT TO have." IT WAS THE SAME MANNER THAT THE MAJOR REVENBERED SEEING BY THE POOL—PERHAPS A TRIFLE LESS AGGRESSIVE, BUT MAKING UP FOR THAT BY AN EVEN INCREASED SELE-CONFIDENCE. DURLAY HAD THOUGHT OF HIS FORMER SUCCESSFUL RIVAL AS A BROKEN MAN. HE WAS NOT THAT. HE HAD NEVER THOUGHT OF HIM AS A SPECULATOR IN BUILDING LAND. SEEMINGLY THAT WAS what he had become. HARRY SAT DOWN BY THE TABLE. SLOYD STANDING BY HIM AND SPREADING OUT BEFORE HIM A PLAN OF BLINKHAMPTON AND THE BLEVATION OF A ROW OF buildings. "YOU ASK US." HARRY WENT ON RESENTEULLY, ALMOST ACCUSINGLY, "TO THROW UP THIS THING JUST WHEN WE'RE READY TO GO AHEAD. EVERYTHING'S IN TRAIN:

TWENTY-TWO THOUSAND. DUPLAY WOULD HAVE HAD A HAND IN A GOOD

we could begin work to-morrow."

"Come, come, where are you come to get the money?" Interrupted Duplay. He felt that he must assert himself.

"Never mind, we can get it; or we can wait till we do. We shut you out just as badly whether we leave the old buildings or put up new. However, we shall get it. I'm satisfied as to that."

"YES," SMLED HARRY. "THE REWARD FOR GETTING AHEAD OF MR IVER IS, IT SEEMS, TWO THOUSAND FOUNDS. IT MUST BE DONE PRETTY OFTEN IF IT'S AS cheap as that! I hope he's well?"

"QUITE WELL, MR TRISTRAM, THANK YOU, BUT WHEN YOU TALK OF GETTING AHEAD.

"You've heard my offer?"

of him----"

"Well, I put it planly; that's all. I'm new to this, and I dare say Sloyd here would put it better. But my money's in it, so I like to have my say."

BOTH THE DISLIKE AND THE RELUCTANT RESPECT OF OLD DAYS WERE PRESENT IN THE MAJOR'S MIND. HE FILT THAT THE QUALITY ON WHOSE ABSENCE IVER HAD BESSEND HIS CALCULATIONS HAD BEEN SUPPLIED. HARRY MICHT BE IGNORANT. SLOYD COULD SUPPLY THE KNOWLEDGE. HARRY HAD THAT GRIT WHICH HTHERTO THE FIRM HAD LACKED. HARRY SEEMED TO GUESS SOMETHING OF WHAT WAS passing through his adversary's mind.

THE FIRM HAD LACKED. HARRY SEEMED TO GUESS SOMETHING OF WHAT WAS passing through his adversary's mind.

"I DON'T WANT TO BE ANYTHING BUT FRIENDLY. NEITHER SLOYD NOR I WANT THAT—ESPECIALLY TOWARD MR WEN—OR TOWARD YOU, MAJOR. WE'VE BEEN NEIGHBORS." HE SMILED AND WENT ON, SMUING STILL: "ODDLY BNOUGH, I'VE SAID WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY TO YOU ONCE BEFORE—ON A DIFFERENT OCCASION. YOU SEEM TO HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FRIGHTEN US. I AM NOT TO BE frightened, that's all."

SLOYD WHISPERED IN HIS EAR, DUPLAY GUESSED THAT HE COUNSELLED MORE URBANTY; HARRY TURNED FROM HIM WITH A RATHER CONTEMPTUOUS LITTLE LAUGH.

"OH. I'VE GOT MY LIVING TO EARN NOW." DUPLAY HEARD HIM WHISPER—AND REFI FOTED THAT HE HAD NEVER WASTED MUCH TIME ON POLITENESS, EVEN before that necessity came upon him. IT WAS STRANGE THAT SLOYD DID NOT TRY TO TAKE ANY PART IN THE DISCUSSION. HE WORE AN AIR OF DEFERENCE, PARTLY DUE NO DOUBT TO HARRY'S ABILITY, YET HAVING UNMSTAKABLY A SOCIAL FLAVOR ABOUT IT. HARRY'S LORD INFESSES CLUNG TO HIM STILL. AND HAD THEIR EFFECT ON HIS BUSINESS PARTNER. DUPLAY LODGED AN ANGRY INWARD PROTEST TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY HAD NONE whatever on him "PERHAPS I'D BETTER JUST SAY WHAT WE WANT." HARRY PURSUED. "WE'VE PAID MASTERS TWENTY THOUSAND. WE MAY BE FIVE HUNDRED MORE OUT OF POCKET, NEVER MND THAT," HE PUSHED AWAY THE PLANS AND ELEVATIONS. "YOU'RE EMPOWERED TO TREAT, I SUPPOSE?" HE ASKED, SLOYD HAD whispered to him again. "No," SAID DUPLAY. "BUT AS A FINAL OFFER, I THINK I CAN PLEDGE MR IVER TO GO AS FAR AS FIVE THOUSAND (OVER AND ABOVE THE TWENTY THOUSAND OF course)—to cover absolutely everything, you know." "Multiply your twenty-five by two, and we're your men," said Harry. "Multiply it by two? Fifty thousand? Oh. nonsense!" "Twenty out of pocket—thirty profit. I call it very reasonable." Major Duplay rose with a decisive air. "I'M AFRAID I'M WASTING YOUR TIME," HE SAID, "AND MY OWN TOO. I MUST say good-afternoon." "Pray, Major Durlay, don't be so abrupt, sir. We've ----- It was Sloyd WHO SPOKE, WITH AN EAGER GESTURE AS THOUGH HE WOULD DETAIN THE visitor. Harry turned on him with his ugliest haughtiest scowl.

"I thought you'd left this to me, Sloyd?" he said.

HAD BEEN SUPPLIED! BUT FOR THAT A TRIUMPH MUST HAVE AWAITED THE Major. Harry turned to Duplay.

"I ASKED YOU BEFORE IF YOU'D AUTHORITY TO TREAT. I ASK YOU NOW IF YOU'VE

SLOYD SUBSIDED. APOLOGETIC BUT EVIDENTLY TERRIFIED. ALAS. THAT THE GRIT

authority to refuse to treat."

"I've authority to refuse to discuss absurdities."

"DOUBTLESS. AND TO SETTLE WHAT ARE ABSURDITIES? LOOK HERE. I DON'T ASK

YOU TO ACCEPT THAT PROPOSAL WITHOUT REPERRING TO MR IVER. I MERELY SAY THAT IS THE PROPOSAL, AND THAT WE GIVE MR IVER THREE DAYS TO CONSIDER IT.

After that our offer is withdrawn."

SLOYD WAS BITING HIS NAILS—AYE. THOSE NAILS THAT HE GOT TRIMMED IN

RECENT STREET TWICE A WEEK; CRITICAL TRANSACTIONS MUST BRING GRIST TO THOSE SKILLED IN MANICURE. DUPLAY GLANCED FROM HIS TROUBLED FACE TO Harry's solid, composed, even amused mask.

"AND YOU MIGHT ADD," HARRY WENT ON, "THAT IT WOULD BE A VERY GOOD THING IF MR IVER SAW HIS WAY TO RUN UP AND HAVE A TALK WITH ME. I THINK I COULD MAKE HIM SEE THE THING FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW." SOMETHING SEEMED TO COOUR TO HIM. "YOU MUST TELL HIM THAT IN ORDINARY

HE WAS, BUT-WELL, HE'LL UNDERSTAND THAT I DON'T WANT TO GO TO Blentmouth just now."

THE IMPLIED APOLOGY RELIEVED WHAT DUPLAY HAD BEGUN TO FEEL AN INTOLEPABLE ARROGANCE. BUT IT WAS A CONCESSION OF FORM ONLY, AND DID

CIRCLIVISTANCES I SHOULD PROPOSE TO CALL ON HIM AND TO COME WHEREVER

NOT TOUCH THE SUBSTANCE. THE SUBSTANCE WAS AND REMAINED AN ULTIMATUM. THE MAJOR FELT AGGRIEVED; HE HAD BEEN VERY ANXIOUS TO

CARRY HIS FIRST COMMISSION THROUGH TRUMPHANTLY AND WITH *éclat*. For the second time Harry Tristram was in his path.

HARRY ROSE "THAT'S ALL WE CAN DO TO-DAY." HE SAID. "WE SHALL WAIT TO

THOUGH, IF I WERE YOU. AT THE WORST, IT WILL JUSTIFY YOU IN REFUSING TO DO BUSINESS WITH US. DO YOU HAPPEN TO BE WALKING DOWN TOWARD PALL MALL?" SLOYD'S OFFICES WERE IN MOUNT STREET. "GOOD-DAY, SLOYD. I'LL drop in to-morrow."

WITH AN IDEA THAT SOME CONCESSION MIGHT STILL BE FORTHOOMING, NOT FROM ANY EXPECTATION OF BUILDYING HIS WALK, THE MAJOR CONSENTED TO accompany Harry.

"I'T WAS A CREAT SURPRISE TO SEE YOU APPEAR," HE SAID AS THEY STARTED.
"So odd a coincidence!"

"NOT AT ALL," SMLED HARRY. "YOU GUESS WHY I WENT INTO IT? NO? WELL, OF COURSE, I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT SUCH THINGS REALLY. BUT SLOYD HAPPENED TO MENTION THAT MER WANTED TO BUY, SO I THOUGHT THE THING MUST BE WORTH

"I really don't feel justified in putting such a proposition before him."

"OH. THAT'S FOR YOU TO CONSIDER." SHRUGGED HARRY. "I THINK I WOULD

hear from Mr Iver."

"OH, ONE MUST DO SOMETHING. I CAN'T SIT DOWN ON FOUR HUNDRED A YEAR, you know. Besides, this is hardly business. By-the-bye, though, I ought to be as much surprised to see you. We've both Lost our situation, is that it, Major?"

INSENSIBLY THE MAJOR BESAN TO FIND HIM RATHER PLEASANTER. NOT A MAN HE

BLYING. AND I LOOKED INTO IT." HE LAUGHED A LITTLE. "THAT'S ONE OF THE

penalties of a reputation like lver's, isn't it?"
"But I didn't know vou'd taken to business at all."

received with a grim smile.
"I knooked you out, you know," Harry Pursued. "Left to Hivself, I don't
believe oud Bos Broadley would ever have moved. But I put him up to

WOULD EVER LIKE REALLY, BUT ALL THE SAME MORE TOLERABLE THAN HE HAD BEEN AT BLENT: SO HARRY'S SOMEWHAT ALDACIOUS RETERBNOE WAS "WELL, YOU TRIED TO PUT ME OUT, YOU SEE, BESIDES, JANIE MER LIKED HIM. AND SHE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT YOU—OR ME BITHER. FOR THAT MATTER. SO JUST BEFORE I—WELL, DISAPPEARED—I TOLD BOB THAT HE'D WIN IF HE WENT ahead. And I gather he has won, hasn't he?" A BRIEF NOD FROM DUPLAY ANSWERED HIM: HE WAS STILL REVOLVING THE NEWS. about Bob Broadlev. "I'M AFRAID I HAVEN'T MADE YOU LIKE ME ANY BETTER." SAID HARRY WITH A laugh. "And I don't go out of my way to get myself disliked. Do you see why I mentioned that little fact about Bob Broadlev just now?" "I CONFESS I DON'T. UNLESS YOU WISHED TO ANNOY ME. OR-PARDONperhaps you thought it fair that I should know?" "NETHER THE ONE NOR THE OTHER. I DIDN'T DO IT FROM THE PERSONAL POINT OF view at all. You see, Bob had a strong position—and didn't know it." DUPLAY GLANCED AT HIM. "WELL," HE SAID, "WHAT YOU DID DIDN'T HELP YOU, though it hurt me perhaps." "I told him he had a strong position. Then he took it. Hullo, here we are in Pall Mall. Now you see. don't you. Major?" "No, I don't." Duplay was short in manner again. "You don't see any parallel between Bob's position and our friend's up

it "

"What?" Duplay had not expected this.

"YES," ASSENTED HARRY, ALMOST GLEEFULLY. "THAT'S WHAT I MEAN; ONLY THS TIME IT WON'T HURT YOU, AND I THINK IT WILL HELP ME. YOU'VE DONE ALL YOU

THERE IN MOUNT STREET?" HARRY LAUGHED AGAIN AS HE HELD OUT HIS HAND.
"Well, you tell the story to liver and see if he does," he suggested.

"Oh, that's what you mean?" growled Duplay.

The touch of Patronage came again. Durlay had hard work to keep his temper under. Yet now it was rather annoyance that he felt than the bij ack dei ke that he used to harbor. Harry's miscorti we had it issened.

could, you know."

Peninsula.

ANNOYANCE MGHT HAVE GONE TOO. UNFORTUNATELY, THE YOUNG MAN seemed almost exultant.

THAT IF ONLY HARRY HAD BEEN MORE CHASTENED BY HIS MISEORTINE THE

"WELL, GOOD-BY. WRITE TO SLOYD—UNLESS IVER DEODES TO COME UP. AND DON'T FORGET THAT LITTLE STORY ABOUT BOB BROADLEY! BECAUSE YOU'LL FIND IT USEFUL, IF YOU THINK OF FRIGHTENING SLOYD. HE CAN'T MOVE WITHOUT ME—and I don't move without my price."

"You moved from Blent," Duplay reminded him, stung to a sudden malice.
"Yes," Said Harry thoughtfully. "Yes, so I dd. Well, I suffose I had my price. Good-by." He turned away and walked quickly down the street.

"What was his price?" Asked the Major, Plizzled. He was not aware that Harry had got anything out of his surrender, and even Harry Hinself seemed rather to conclude that, since he had moved, he must have got his price than to say that he had got it or to be able to tell

what it was.

But all that was not the question now. Durlay sought the telegraph
office and informed liver of the uncompromising attitude of the enemy.

HE added that Harry Tristram was in the business and that Harry
suggested an interview. It was perhaps the most significant tribute

HE ADDED THAT HARRY TRISTRAM WAS IN THE BUSINESS AND THAT HARRY SUGGESTED AN INTERVIEW. IT WAS PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT TRIBUTE THAT HARRY HAD YET RECEIVED WHEN, AFTER A FEW MINUTES OF SURPRISE AND A FEW MORE OF CONSIDERATION, IVER TELEGRAPHED BACK THAT HE WOULD COME UP TO TOWN, AND WISHED AN APPOINTMENT TO BE MADE FOR HIM WITH MR. TRISTRAM. IT WAS SOMETHING TO FORCE NAPOLEON TO COME TO THE

IN FACT, THE ONLY THING THAT COULD UPSET IVER'S PLANS WAS BLANK DEFIANCE. REVIEWING HIS MEMORIES OF HARRY TRISTRAM. HE KNEW THAT DEFIANCE WAS JUST WHAT HE HAD TO FEAR. IT WAS IN THE BLOOD OF THE TRISTRAMS. AND prudence made no better a resistance than propriety.

XX

The Tristram Way—A Specimen

HARRY TRISTRAM HAD LED LADY EVENSWOOD TO BELIEVE THAT HE WOULD INFORM HIMSELF OF HIS COLISIN'S STATE OF MIND, OR EVEN OPEN DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH HER. HE HAD DONE NOTHING TO REDEEM THIS IMPLIED. PROMISE, ALTHOUGH THE REMEMBRANCE OF IT HAD NOT PASSED OUT OF HIS MND. BUT HE WAS DISINGUINED TO FULFIL IT. IN THE FIRST PLACE, HE WAS MUCH OCCUPIED WITH THE PURSUITS AND INTERESTS OF HIS NEW LIFE: SECONDLY, HE SAW NO WAY TO APPROACH HER IN WHICH HE WOULD NOT SEEM A DISAGREEABLE REMINDER: HE MIGHT EVEN BE TAKEN FOR A BEGGAR OR AT LEAST REGARDED AS A REPROACHFUL SUPPLIANT, THE SPLENDOR, THE DRAMATIC EFFECT OF HIS SURRENDER AND OF THE SCENE WHICH HAD LED UP TO IT, WOULD RE ENDANGERED AND PROBABLY SPOLIT BY A RESUMPTION OF INTERCOLLESS. BETWEEN THEM. HIS DISAPPEARANCE HAD BEEN MAGNIFICENT—NO OTHER CONCLUSION COLLID EXPLAIN THE SATISFACTION WITH WHICH HE LOOKED BACK ON THE EPISODE. THERE WAS NO MATERIAL YET FOR A REAPPEARANCE EQUALLY STRIKING. WHEN HE THOUGHT ABOUT HER-WHICH WAS NOT VERY OFTEN JUST NOW-IT WAS NOT TO SAY THAT HE WOULD NEVER MEET HER AGAIN: HE LIKED HER TOO WELL, AND SHE WAS TOO DEEPLY BOUND UP WITH THE ASSOCIATIONS OF HIS LIFE FOR THAT: BUT IT WAS TO DECIDE TO POSTPONE THE MEETING. AND TO DREAM PERHAPS OF SOME PROGRESS OR TURN OF EVENTS WHICH SHOULD PRESENT HIM WITH HIS OPPORTUNITY. AND INVEST THEIR RENEWED ACQUAINTANCE WITH AN ATMOSPHERE AS UNUSUAL AND AS STIMULATING AS THAT IN WHICH THEIR FIRST DAYS TOGETHER HAD BEEN SPENT. THUS THINKING OF HER ONLY AS SHE AFFECTED HIM. HE RE. MAINED AT HEART INSENSIBLE TO THE ASPECT OF THE CASE WHICH LADY EVENSWOOD HAD COMMENDED TO HIS NOTICE CECLY'S POSSIBLE LINHAPPINESS DID NOT COME HOME TO HIM.

POSITION WOULD CONSOLE MOST FOLK FOR SOMEBODY FLSE'S BAD LUCK: MEN IN BAD LUCK THEMSELVES WILL FASILY TAKE SUCH A VIEW AS THAT: THEIR INTIMACY MAKES A SECOND-HAND ACCULAINTANCE WITH SORROW SEEM A trifling trouble. YET HE HAD KNOWN HIS MOTHER WILL. AND HE HAD MADE HIS SURRENDER. WELL. ONLY A VERY OBSERVANT MAN CAN TELL WHAT HIS OWN MOODS MAY BE. IT IS TOO MUCH TO ASK ANYBODY TO PROPHESY ANOTHER'S: AND THE LAST THING A MAN APPRECIATES IS THE FAMILY PECULIARITIES—UNLESS HE HAPPENS NOT to share them. Southend was working quetly; alded by Jenkinson Neeld. He had PREPARED AN ELABORATE STATEMENT AND FIRED IT IN AT MR DISNEY'S DOOR. HIMSELF RETREATING AS HASTILY AS THE URCHIN WHO HAS THROWN A CRACKER. I ADY EVENSWOOD WAS TRYING TO INDUCE HER EMINENT COUSIN TO COME TO TEA. THE IMP. IN RESPONSE TO THAT OFFICIAL MISSIVE WHICH HAD MADE SUCH AN IMPRESSION ON HER. WAS COMPILING HER REMINISCENCES OF HEDELBERG AND ADDIE TRISTRAM. EVERYBODY WAS AT WORK, AND IT WAS

AFTER ALL, SHE HAD EVERYTHING AND HE NOTHING—AND EVEN HE WAS NOT INSUPPORTABLY UNHAPPY. HIS IDEA. PERHARS. WAS THAT BLENT AND A HIGH

VAGUELY UNDERSTOOD THAT MR DISNEY WAS CONSIDERING THE MATTER, AT LEAST THAT HE HAD NOT CONSIGNED ALL THE DOCUMENTS TO THE WASTE-PAPER BASKET AND THE WRITERS TO PERDITION—WHICH WAS A GREAT POINT GAINED WITH MR DISNEY. "NO HURRY, GIVE ME TIME"—"DON'T PUSH IT"—"WAIT"—"DO NOTHING"—"THE STATUS QUO"—ALL THESE VARIOUS PHRASSS EXPRESSED LORD SQUITHNO'S EARWEST AND RE-ITERATED ADVICE

TO THE CONSPIRATORS. A BARONY HAD, IN HIS JUDGMENT, BEGUN TO BE A THING WHICH MIGHT BE MENTIONED WITHOUT A SMILE. AND THE VISCOUNTY—

WELL, SAID LADY EVENSWOOD, IF ROBERT WERE ONCE CONVINCED, THE WANT OF PRECEDENTS WOULD NOT STOP HIM, PRECEDENTS MUST, AFTER ALL, BE

made, and why should not Robert make them?

This then, the moment when all the wise and experienced people were agreed that nothing could, should, or ought to be done, was the HESITATION: CECILY, HER BLOOD UNAVOIDABLY DILUTED WITH A STRAIN OF GAINSBOROUGH, TOOK TWO WHOLE DAYS TO MAKE THE PLUNGE-TWO DAYS AND A STRUGGLE. NEITHER OF WHICH WOULD HAVE HAPPENED HAD SHE BEEN ADDIE. BUT SHE DID AT LAST REACH THE CONCLUSION THAT IMMEDIATE ACTION. WAS NECESSARY. THAT SHE WAS THE PERSON TO ACT, THAT SHE COULD ENDURE NO MORE DELAY. THAT SHE MUST HERSELF GO TO HARRY AND DO THE ONE TERRIBLE THING WHICH ALONE SUITED. MET. AND COULD SAVE THE SITUATION. IT WAS VERY HORRIBLE TO HER. HERE WAS ITS LAST AND IRRESISTIBLE FASCINATION. MINA SUPPLIED HARRY'S ADDRESS-OSTENSIBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF A LETTER; nothing else was necessary but a hansom cab. IN HIS QUIET ROOM IN DUKE STREET. HARRY WAS WORKING OUT SOME DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED BUILDINGS AT BUNKHAMPTON. IVER WAS TO COME TO TOWN. NEXT DAY, AND HARRY THOUGHT THAT THE MORE ENTIRELY READY THEY SEEMED TO GO ON. THE MORE EAGER IVER WOULD BE TO STOP THEM: SO HE WAS AT IT WITH HIS ELEVATIONS, PLANS, AND ESTIMATES, IT WAS JUST SIX O'CLOCK, AND A COUPLE OF QUIET HOURS STRETCHED BEFORE HIM. NOTHING WAS IN HIS MIND. EXCEPT BLINKHAMPTON: HE HAD FORGOTTEN HIMSELF AND HIS PAST FORTUNES. BLENT AND THE REST OF IT: HE HAD EVEN FORGOTTEN THE PECULIARITIES OF HIS

CHANCE FOR A TRISTRAM. ADDIE WOULD HAVE SEZED IT WITHOUT AN INSTANT'S

OWN FAMILY. HE HEARD WITH MOST GENLINE VEXATION THAT A LADY MUST SEE HIM ON URGENT BUSINESS: BUT HE HAD NOT EXPERIENCE ENOUGH TO embolden him to send word that he was out. Such a Message would probably have availed nothing. Cecily was ALREADY AT THE DOOR: SHE WAS IN THE ROOM BEFORE HE HAD DONE GIVING DIRECTIONS THAT SHE SHOULD BE ADMITTED. AGAIN THE LIKENESS WHICH HAD

ALREADY WORKED ON HIM SO POWERFULLY STRUCK HIM WITH UNLESSENED FORCE FOR ITS SAKE HE SPRANG FORWARD TO GREET HER AND MET HER OUTSTRETCHED HANDS WITH HIS THERE WAS NO APPEARANCE OF

EMBARRASSMENT ABOUT HER. RATHER A GREAT GLADNESS AND A TRIUMPH IN HER OWN COURAGE IN COMING. SHE SEEMED QUITE SURE THAT SHE HAD done the right thing.

SHE BROUGHT EVERYTHING BACK TO HIM VERY STRONGLY—AND IN A MOMENT banished Blinkhampton.

"Does anybody know you've come?"

"No," SHE SMLED. THAT WAS A PART OF THE FUN. "MINA DIDN'T KNOW I WAS

"YOU DIDN'T COME TO ME. SO I CAME TO YOU." SHE EXPLAINED. AS THOUGH

the explanation were guite sufficient.

GOING OUT. YOU SEE EVERYBODY'S BEEN DOING SOMETHING EXCEPT ME and——"

"Oh, never mind now. Nothing of any real use." "There's nothing to do." said Harry with a smile and a shrug.

"Everybody doing something? Doing what?"

SHE WAS A LITTLE DISAFFOINTED TO FIND HIM LOOKING SO WIELL, SO CHEERFUL, SO BUSY. BUT THE NEW IMPRESSION WAS NOT STRONG BNOUGH TO UPSET THE PRECONCEPTIONS WITH WHICH SHE HAD COME. "I'VE COME TO TIELL YOU I CAN'T

PRECONCEPTIONS WITH WHICH SHE HAD COME. "I'VE COME TO TELL YOU I CAN'T bear it," she said. "Oh, why did you ever do it, Harry?"

"ON MY HONOR I DON'T KNOW," HE ADMITTED AFTER A MOMENT'S THOUGHT.

"On MY HONOR I DON'T KNOW," HE ADMITTED AFTER A MOMENT'S THOUGHT.
"WON'T YOU SIT DOWN?" HE WATCHED HER SEAT HERSELF, ACTUALLY HOPING FOR
THE FAMOUS ATTITUDE. BUT SHE WAS TOO EXCITED FOR IT. SHE SAT UPRIGHT,
HER HANDS CLASPED ON HER KNEES. HER AIR WAS ONE OF GRAVITY, OF
TREMULOUS IMPORTANCE. SHE REALIZED WHAT SHE WAS GOING TO DO; IF SHE
HAD FALLED TO UNDERSTAND ITS VERY UNUSUAL CHARACTER SHE WOULD.

probably never have done it at all.
"I CAN'T BEAR THIS STATE OF THINGS," SHE BEGAN. "I CAN'T ENDURE IT ANY longer."

ionger. "Oh, I can, I'm all right. I hope you haven't been worrying?"

"Worrying! I've robbed you, robbed you of everything. Oh, I know you

it?"

"I DON'T KNOW," HE SAID AGAIN. "WELL, YOU SEEMED SO IN YOUR FLACE AT BLENT. SOMEHOW YOU MADE ME FEEL AN INTERLOPER AND ——" H paused a moment. "Yes, I'm glad," he ended.

"No, No, YOU MUSTIN'T BE GLAD," SHE CRIED QUICKLY. "BECAUSE IT'S unendurable, unendurable!"

"To you? It's not to me. I thought it might be. It isn't."

"Yes, to me, to me! Oh, end it for me, Harry, end it for me!"

SHE WAS IMPLORING, SHE WAS THE SUPPLIANT. THE REVERSAL OF PARTS, STRANGE IN ITSELF, HARDLY SEEMED STRANGE TO HARRY TRISTRAM. AND IT MADE HMI QUITE HIS OLD SELF AGAIN. HE FELT THAT HE HAD SOMETHING TO

DID IT YOURSELF! THAT MAKES IT WORSE. HOW DID I COME TO MAKE YOU DO

He was silent a full minute before he answered slowly and coldly:

"FROM ANYBODY ELSE I SHOULD TREAT THAT AS AN INSULT; WITH YOU I'M WILLING
TO THINK IT MERELY IGNORANCE. IN BITHER CASE THE ABSURDITY'S THE SAME."

HE TURNED AWAY FROM HER WITH A LOOK OF DISTASTE, ALMOST OF DISGUST.

"How in the world could you do it?" he added by way of climax.

"You must take it back. Let me give it back to you," she prayed.

give. But her next words shattered that delusion.

"I COULD DO IT. IN ONE WAY I COULD." SHE ROSE AS HE TURNED BACK TO HER. "I WANT YOU TO HAVE BLENT. YOU'RE THE PROPER MASTER OF BLENT. DO YOU think I want to have it by accident?"

"YOU HAVE IT BY LAW, NOT BY ACCIDENT," HE ANSWERED CURTLY. HE WAS GROWING ANGRY. "WHY DO YOU COME HERE AND UNSETTLE ME?" HE demanded. "I wasn't thinking of it. And then you come here!"

She was apologetic no longer. She faced him boldly.

"YOU OUGHT TO THINK OF IT." SHE INSISTED. "AND. YES. I'VE COME HERE BECAUSE IT WAS RIGHT FOR ME TO COME. BECAUSE I COLLON'T RESPECT myself unless I came. I want you to take back Blent." "What infernal nonsense!" he exclaimed, "You know it's impossible," "No." SHE SAID: SHE WAS CALM BUT HER BREATH CAME QUICK. "THERE'S one way in which it's possible." IN AN INSTANT HE UNDERSTOOD HER: THERE WAS NO NEED OF MORE WORDS. SHE KNEW HERSELF TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS SHE LOOKED AT HIM: AND FOR A WHILE SHE LOOKED STEADILY. BUT HIS GAZE TOO WAS LONG. AND IT BECAME VERY SEARCHING, SO THAT PRESENTLY, IN SPITE OF HER EFFORTS, SHE FELT HERSELF FLUSHING RED. AND HER EYES FELL. THE ROOM HAD BECOME UNCOMFORTABLY quiet too. At last he spoke. "I SUPPOSE YOU REVIEWBER WHAT I TOLD YOU ABOUT JANE IVER." HE SAID. "AND THAT'S HOW YOU CAME TO THINK I MIGHT DO THIS. YOU MUST SEE THAT THAT WAS DIFFERENT. I GAVE AS MUCH AS I GOT THERE. SHE WAS RICH. I was----" He smled sourly, "I was Tristram of Blent, You are Tristram of Blent, I am——" He shrugged his shoulders. HE MADE NO REFERENCE TO THE PERSONAL SIDE OF THE CASE. SHE WAS NOT hurt, she was enormously relieved. "I'm not inclined to be a pensioner on my wife," he said. SHE OPENED HER LIPS TO SPEAK: SHE WAS WITHIN AN ACE OF TELLING HIM THAT, IF THIS AND THAT WENT WELL, HE WOULD HAVE SO ASSURED AND RECOGNIZED A POSITION THAT NONE COULD THROW STONES AT HIM. HER WORDS DIED AWAY IN FACE OF THE PEREMPTORY FINALITY OF HIS WORDS AND THE BITTER ANGER ON HIS FACE. SHE SAT SILENT AND FORLORN, WONDERING WHAT HAD become of her resolve and her inspiration. "IN MY PLACE YOU WOULD FEEL AS I DO." HE SAID A MOMENT LATER. HIS TONE

WAS MILDER. "YOU CAN'T DENY IT." HE INSISTED. "LOOK ME IN THE FACE AND

For some minutes longer she sat still. Then she got up with a desolate AIR. EVERYTHING SEEMED OVER: THE GREAT OFFER, WITH ITS GREAT SCENE, HAD COME TO VERY LITTLE, ANTICLIMAX, FOE TO EMOTION! SHE REMEMBERED HOW THE SCENE IN THE LONG GALLERY HAD GONE. SO MUCH BETTER, SO MUCH BETTER! BUT HARRY DOMNATED HER—AND HE HAD STOPPED THE SCENE. Without attempting to bid him any farewell she moved toward the door slowly and drearily. SHE WAS ARRESTED BY HIS VOICE—A NEW VOICE, VERY GOOD-NATURED. rather chaffing. "Are you doing anything particular to-night?" he asked. SHE TURNED ROUND: HE WAS SMILING AT HER IN AN OPEN BUT FRIENDLY amusement. "No," she murmured. "I'm going back home, I suppose." "To Blent?" he asked quickly.

deny it if you can. I know you too well."

left her sentence unfinished. "Well. I've got nothing to do. Let's have dinner and go somewhere together?"

"No, to our house. Mina's there and _____" Her face was ruzzled; she

THER EYES MET, GRADUALLY CECILY'S LIGHTENED INTO A SPARKLE AS HER LIPS. BENT AND HER WHITE TEETH SHOWED A LITTLE. SHE WAS ALMOST LAUGHING

OUTRIGHT AS SHE ANSWERED READILY, WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A SHOW OF hesitation or a hint of surprise. "Yes."

NOTHING ELSE CAN BE SO AMPLE AS A MONOSYLLABLE IS SOMETIMES. IF IT HAD BEEN HARRY'S OBJECT TO ESCAPE FROM A TRAGIC OR SENSATIONAL SITUATION HE HAD ACHEVED IT TRIUMPHANTLY. THE QUESTION WAS NO LONGER

WHO SHOULD HAVE BLENT, BUT WHERE THEY SHOULD HAVE DINNER, NOTHING IN

HOPED WOULD PROVE A VERY PLEASANT EVENING. FINALLY HE MEANT TO HAVE ONE MORE WORD WITH HER ON THE MATTER OF HER VISIT BEFORE THEY PARTED. HIS PLAN WAS VERY OFFAR IN HIS HEAD. BY THE BUD OF THE EVENING SHE WOULD HAVE FORGOTTEN THE EXALTED MOOD WHICH HAD LED HER INTO ABSURDITY: SHE WOULD LISTEN TO A FEW WISE AND WEIGHTY WORDS-SUCH AS HE WOULD HAVE AT COMMAND. THEN THE LUDICROUS EPISODE WOULD BE

OVER AND DONE WITH FOREVER: TO ITS LIKENESS. SUPERFICIALLY AT LEAST RATHER STRONG TO THAT OTHER SCENE IN WHICH HE HAD BEEN CHIEF ACTOR HIS MIND

HIS MANNER SHOWED THAT HE HAD RISKED AND SLICCEEDED IN A HAZARDOLIS EXPERIMENT: HE HAD BROUGHT HER DOWN TO THE LEVEL OF COMMON-SENSE-THAT IS. TO HIS OWN VIEW OF THINGS: INCIDENTALLY HE HAD SECURED WHAT HE

A VERY PLEASANT EVENING IT PROVED: SO THAT IT PROLONGED ITSELF. NATURALLY AS IT WERE AND WITHOUT EXPRESS ARRANGEMENT, BEYOND DINNER AND THE PLAY, AND EMBRACED IN ITS MANY HOURS A LITTLE SUPPER AND A LONG DRIVE IN A CAB TO THOSE DISTANT REGIONS WHERE CECILY'S HOUSE WAS SITUATED. THERE WAS NO MORE TALK OF BLENT: THERE WAS SOME OF HARRY'S NEW LIFE. ITS FEATURES AND ITS PLANS: THERE WAS A GOOD DEAL ABOUT NOTHING IN PARTICULAR: AND THERE WAS NOT MUCH OF ANY SORT AS THEY DROVE ALONG IN

the cab at one o'clock in the morning. BUT HARRY'S PURPOSE WAS NOT FORCOTTEN. HE BADE THE CARMAN WAIT AND FOLLOWED CECILY INTO THE HOUSE. HE LOOKED ROUND IT WITH LIVELY INTEREST. and curiosity. "SO THIS IS WHERE YOU CAME FROM!" HE EXCLAIMED WITH A

compassionate smile. "You do want something to make up for this!" She laughed as she took off her hat and sank into a chair. "Yes, this is —home." she said.

"Have you had a pleasant evening?" he demanded. "You know I have "

did not advert.

Now came the attitude: she threw herself into it and smiled. "That's what I wanted." he went on. "Now I can say what I have to say."

SHE SAT STILL, WAITING TO HEAR HIM. THERE WAS NOW NO SIGN OF UNEASINESS ABOUT HER. SHE SMLED LUXURIOUSLY, AND HER EYES WERE RESTING ON HIS FACE WITH EVIDENT PLEASURE. THEY WERE TOGETHER AGAIN.

"Are you feeling friendly to me?"

AS THEY HAD BEEN IN THE LONG GALLERY: THE SAME CONTENTMENT POSSESSED HER. THE INNER FEELING HAD ITS OUTWARD EFFECT. THERE CAME ON HIM THE SAME ADMIRATION. THE SAME SENSE THAT SHE COMMANDED HIS LOYALTY. WHEN SHE HAD COME TO HIS ROOMS THAT AFTERNOON HE HAD

FOUND IT EASY TO REBUKE AND TO RULE HER. HIS INTENT FOR THE EVENING HAD BEEN THE SAME: HE HAD SOUGHT TO BRING HER TO A MORE FRIENDLY MIND CHIEFLY THAT SHE MIGHT ACCEPT WITH GREATER READINESS THE CHASTENING OF COOL COMMON-SENSE, AND A REBUKE FROM THE DECENT PRIDE WHICH HER

PROPOSAL HAD OUTRAGED. HARRY WAS AMAZED TO FIND HIMSELF SUDDENLY AT a loss, looking at the girl, hardly knowing how to speak to her. "WELL?" SHE SAID. WHERE NOW WAS THE TREMULOUS EXCITEMENT? SHE WAS MAGNIFICENTLY AT HER EASE AND COMMANDED HIM TO SPEAK. IF HE had anything to say. If not, let him hold his peace.

BUT HE WAS PROUD AND OBSTINATE TOO. THEY CAME TO A CONFLICT THERE IN

THE LITTLE ROOM—THE FORGOTTEN CAB WAITING OUTSIDE. THE FORGOTTEN MINA BEGINNING TO STIR IN HER BED AS VOICES DIMLY REACHED HER EARS AND SHE awoke to the question—where was Cecily? "IF WE'RE TO BE FRIENDS." HARRY BEGAN. "I MUST HEAR NO MORE OF WHAT YOU

SAID THIS AFTERNOON. YOU ASKED ME TO BE A PENSIONER, YOU PROPOSED yourself to be----"

He did not finish. The word was not handy, or he wished to spare her.

She showed no signs of receiving mercy.

"What it cost you?"

SHE BROKE INTO A SCORNFUL LAUGH. "YOU KNOW WHAT IT REALLY MEANT. STILL
YOU'VE ONLY A SCOLDING FOR ME! HOW FUNNY THAT YOU SEE ONE HALF AND NOT
THE OTHER! BUT YOU'VE GIVEN ME A VERY PLEASANT EVENING, COUSIN
HAITV."

"VERY WELL," SHE SAID, SMLING. "IF YOU KNEW EVERYTHING, YOU WOULDN'T talk like that. I suppose you've no idea what it cost me?"

"You must leave my life alone," he insisted brusquely.

"OH, YES, FOR THE FUTURE. I'VE NOTHING LEFT TO OFFER, HAVE I? I HAVE BEEN—
refused!" She seemed to exult in the abandonment of her candor.

HE LOOKED AT HER ANGRILY, ALMOST DANGEROUSLY. FOR A FASSING MOMENT SHE HAD A SENSATION OF THAT PHYSICAL FEAR FROM WHICH NO MORAL COURAGE CAN WHOLLY REDEEM THE WEAK IN BODY. BUT SHE SHOWED NONE OF IT, HER POSE WAS UNCHANGED; ONLY THE HAND ON WHICH HER HEAD RESTED SHOOK A LITTLE. AND SHE BEGAN TO LAUGH. "YOU LOOK AS IF YOU WERE GOING TO HIT ME," She said.

"OH, YOU DO TALK NONSENSE!" HE GROANED. BUT SHE WAS TOO MUCH FOR HIM, HE LAUGHED TOO. SHE HAD SPOKEN WITH SUCH A GRAND SECURITY. "IF you tell me to walk out of the door I shall go."

"Well, in five minutes. It's very late."

"Oh, we weren't bred in Bayswater," he reminded her. "I was—in Chelsea."

"So you say. I think in heaven—no, Olympus—really."

"Have you said what you wanted to say, Cousin Harry?"

"I suppose you hadn't the least idea what you were doing?"

"I was as cool as you were when you gave me Blent." "YOU'RE COOL ENOUGH NOW, ANYHOW," HE ADMITTED, IN ADMIRATION OF HER parry.

"Quite. THANKS." THE HAND BEHIND HER HEAD TREVBLED SORELY. HIS EYES were on her, and a confusion threatened to overwhelm the composure

of which she boasted

"What I offered you is mine."

"I gave you Blent because it was yours."

"By God, no. Never yours to give till you've lost it!"

WITH AN EFFORT SHE KEPT HER POSE. HIS WORDS HUMMED THROUGH HER head.

"DID YOU SAY THAT TO JANIE IVER?" SHE MUSTERED COOLNESS TO ASK HIM mockinaly.

HE THRUST AWAY THE TAUNT WITH A MOTION OF HIS HAND: ONE OF

GAINSBOROUGH'S GIMORACKS FELL SMASHED ON THE FLOOR. CECLY LAUGHED.

glad of the excuse to seem at her ease.

"Hang the thing! If you'd loved me, you'd have been ashamed to do it."

"I was ashamed without loving you, Cousin Harry." "Oh, do drop 'Cousin' Harry!"

"Well. I PROPOSED TO. BUT YOU WOULDN'T." HER ONLY REFUGE NOW WAS IN QUIPS AND VERBAL VICTORIES. THEY SERVED HER WILL, FOR HARRY, LESS MASTER OF HIMSELF THAN USUAL. WAS HINDERED AND TRIPPED UP BY THEM.

"Still, if we ever meet again, I'll say 'Harry' if you like." "Of course we shall meet again." She surprised that out of him.

ALMOST HATING HERSELF NOW. YET SORELY WOUNDED THAT HE SHOULD THINK OF hating her, she answered him in a furv. "WELL THEN, SHOULDN'T I HATE YOU FOR GIVING ME BLENT? THAT WAS WORSE. YOU COULD REFUSE, I COULDN'T, I HAVE IT, I HAVE TO KEEP IT." IN HER EXCITEMENT SHE ROSE AND FACED HIM. "AND BECAUSE OF YOU I CAN'T BE happy!" she cried resentfully. "I SEE! I OUGHT TO HAVE DROWNED MYSELF. INSTEAD OF MERELY GOING AWAY? OH, I KNOW I OWE THE WORLD AT LARGE APOLOGIES FOR MY EXISTENCE, AND YOU IN PARTICULAR, OF COURSE! UNFORTUNATELY, THOUGH, LINTEND TO GO ON EXISTING: I EVEN INTEND TO LIVE A LIFE OF MY OWN-NOT THE LIFE OF A HANGERon-if you'll kindly allow me." "Would any other man in the world talk like this after——?"

"It'll be so awkward for me now." she laughed lightly. But her mirth broke off suddenly as he came closer and stood over her. "I could hate you for coming to me with that offer." he said.

"Any man who had the sense to see what you'd done, I'm bound to be A NUSANCE TO YOU ANYHOW. I SHOULD BE LEAST OF A NUSANCE AS YOUR husband! That was it. Oh. I'm past astonishment at you." HIS WORDS SOUNDED SAVAGE. BUT IT WAS NOT THEIR FIERCENESS THAT BANISHED HER MIRTH. IT WAS THE NEW LIGHT THEY THREW ON THAT IMPLISE OF

hers. She could only fall back on her old recrimination.

"When you gave me Blent----" "HOLD YOUR TONGUE ABOUT BLENT." HE COMMANDED IMPERIOUSLY. "IF IT

WERE MINE AGAIN. AND I CAME TO YOU AND SAID. 'YOU'RE ON MY CONSCIENCE, YOU FRET ME, YOU WORRY ME, MARRY ME, AND I SHALL BE MORE comfortable!' What then?"

"Why, it would be just like you to do it!" she cried in malicious triumph.

OF HS SNEER. "OH, YES, THAT WAS IT. WELL, WHAT WOULD YOUR ANSWER BE? SHALL I TELL YOU? YOU'D ASK THE FIRST MAN WHO CAME BY TO KICK ME OUT OF the room. And you'd be right."

"THE SORT OF THING RUNS IN THE FAMILY, THEN," SHE STARTED AT THE PLAINNESS.

THE TRUTH OF HIS WORDS PIERCED HER. SHE FLUSHED RED, BUT SHE WAS
RESOLVED TO ADMIT NOTHING. BEFORE HIM, AT ANY RATE, SHE WOULD CLING TO

RESOLVED TO ADM'T NOTHING. BEFORE HIM, AT ANY RATE, SHE WOULD CLING TO HER CASE, TO THE VIEW OF HER OWN ACTION TO WHICH SHE STOOD COMMITTED.

HE AT LEAST SHOULD NEVER KNOW THAT NOW AT LAST HE HAD MADE HER BITTERLY AND HORRIBLY ASHAMED, WITH A SHAME NOT FOR WHAT SHE HAD

PROPOSED TO DO HERSELF, BUT FOR WHAT SHE HAD DARED TO ASK HIM TO DO.

SHE SAW THE THING NOW AS HE SAW IT. HAD HIS MANNER SOFTBNED, HAD HE
MADE ANY APPEAL, HAD HE NOT LASHED HER WITH THE BITTERST WORDS HE
COULD FIND, SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN TEARS AT HIS FEET. BUT NOW SHE
FACED HIM SO BOLDLY THAT HE TOOK HER FLUSH TO MEAN ANGER. HE TURNED
AWAY FROM HER AND PICKED UP HIS HAT FROM THE CHAIR ON WHICH HE HAD
thrown it.

"Well. that's all. isn't it?" he asked.

BEFORE SHE HAD TIME TO ANSWER, THERE WAS A CRY FROM THE DOORWAY, FULL OF ASTONISHMENT, CONSTIERNATION, AND (IT MUST BE ADDED) OUTRAGED PROPRIETY. FOR IT WAS PAST TWO O'CLOCK AND MINA ZABRISKA, FOR ALL HER FREAKISHNESS, HAD BEEN BRED ON STRICT LINES OF DECORUM. "CEOLLY!" SHE CRIED. "AND YOU!" SHE ADDED A MOMENT LATER. THEY TURNED AND SAW HER STANDING THERE IN HER DRESSING-GOMN, HOLDING A CANDLE. THE SUDDEN TURN OF EVENTS, THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS NEW FIGURE, THE INTRUSION THAT SEEMED SO ABSURD, OVERCAME CEOLLY. SHE SANK BACK IN HER CHAIR.

Harry's frown grew heavier.

"OH, YOU'RE THERE?" HE SAID TO MINA. "YOU'RE IN IT TOO, I SUPPOSE? I'VE ALWAYS HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO INTEREST YOU, HAVEN'T I? YOU WANTED TO TURN ME OUT FIRST. NOW YOU'RE TRYING TO PUT ME IN AGAIN, ARE YOU? OH,

AND LAID HER HEAD ON HER HANDS ON THE TABLE. LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY.

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
Do you know it's half-past two?"

"IT WOULD BE ALL THE SAME TO ME IF IT WAS HALF-PAST TWENTY-TWO," SAID Harry contemptuously.

vou women, can't vou leave a man alone?"

"You've been with her all the time?"

"OH, LORD, YES. ARE YOU THE CHAPERON?" HE LAUGHED, AS HE UNCEREMONOUSLY CLAPPED HIS HAT ON HIS HEAD. "WE'VE HAD AN EVENING OUT, MY COUSIN AND I, AND I SAW HER HOME. AND NOW I'M GOING HOME.

Nothing wrong, I hope, Madame Zabriska?" Cecily raised her head; she was laughing still, with tears in her eyes.

MINA LOOKED AT HER. CONSIDERATIONS OF PROPRIETY FELL INTO THE background.

"But what's it all about?" she cried.

"I'LL LEAVE CEOLY TO TELL YOU." HE WAS QUET NOW, BUT WITH A VICIOUS QUIETNESS. "I'VE BEEN EXPLAINING THAT I HAVE A PREFERENCE FOR BEING LEFT ALONE. PERHAPS IT MAY NOT BE SUPERPLUOUS TO MENTION THE FACT TO YOU

TOO, MADAME ZABRISKA. MY CAB'S WAITING. GOOD-NIGHT." HE LOOKED A MOMENT AT CECLLY, AND HIS EYES SEEMED TO DWELL A LITTLE LONGER THAN HE HAD MEANT. IN A TONE RATHER SOFTER AND MORE GENTLE HE REFEATED, "GOOd-night."

CECLY SPRANG TO HER FEET. "I SHALL REVIEWBER!" SHE CRIED. "I SHALL REVIEWBER! IF EVER—IF EVER THE TIME COMES, I SHALL REVIEWBER!" HER voice was full of bitterness, her manner proudly defiant.

HARRY HESTIATED A MOMENT, THEN SMILED GRIMLY. "I SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO complain of that," he said, as he turned and went out to his cab.

CECILY THREW HERSELF INTO HER CHAIR AGAIN. THE BEWILDERED IMP STOOD staring at her. "I didn't know where you were." Mina complained.

"Fancy being here with him at this time of night!"

"Oh. it doesn't matter."

CECILY GAVE NO SIGNS OF HEARING THIS SUPERFICIAL CRITICISM ON HER conduct.

"You must tell me what it's all about." Mina insisted.

CECILY RAISED HER EYES WITH A WEARY AIR. AS THOUGH SHE SPOKE OF A distasteful subject unwillingly and to no good purpose.

"I went to tell him he could get Blent back by marrying me."

"CECILY!" MANY EVICTIONS WERE PACKED INTO THE CRY. "WHAT DID HE

say?"

Cecily seemed to consider for a moment, then she answered slowly:

"Well, he very nearly beat me—and I rather wish he had," she said. THE NET RESULT OF THE DAY HAD DISTINCTLY NOT BEEN TO FURTHER CERTAIN.

SCHEMES. ALL THAT HAD BEEN ACHEVED—AND BOTH OF THEM HAD contributed to it—was an admirable example of the Tristram way.

XXI

The Persistence of Blent

HARRY TRISTRAM AWOKE THE NEXT MORNING WITH VISIONS IN HIS HEAD—NO UNUSUAL THING WITH YOUNG MENLYET STRANGE AND ALMOST UNKNOWN TO HIM. THEY HAD NOT BEEN WONT TO COME AT BLENT, NOR HAD HIS AFFAIR WITH JANIE IVER CREATED THEM POSSIBLY A CONSTANT, ALTHOUGH UNCONSCIOUS. REFERENCE OF ALL ATTRACTIONS TO THE STANDARD, OR THE TRADITION, OF ADDIE TRISTRAMS HAD HITHERTO KEPT HIM FREE: OR PERHAPS IT WAS MERELY THAT THERE WERE NO STRIKING ATTRACTIONS IN THE VALUEY OF THE BUENT. ANYHOW THE VISIONS WERE HERE NOW. A SERIES OF THEM COVERING ALL THE HOURS OF THE EVENING BEFORE, AND EMBODYING FOR HIM THE MANIFOLD CHANGES OF FEELING WHICH HAD MARKED THE TIME. HE SAW HIMSELF AS WELL AS CECILY, AND THE APPROVAL OF HIS EYES WAS STILL FOR HIMSELF. THEIR IRRITATION FOR HER. BUT HE COULD NOT DISMSS HER FROM THE PICTURES: HE REALIZED THIS WITH A NEW ANNOYANCE. HE LAY LATER THAN HIS CLISTOM WAS LOOKING AT HER RECALLING WHAT SHE HAD SAID AS HE FOLIND THE NEED OF WORDS TO WRITE BENEATH EACH MENTAL APPARTION. UNDER THE IRRITATION, AND GREATER THAN IT. WAS THE SAME SORT OF SATISFACTION THAT HIS ACTIVITIES HAD GIVEN HIM-A FEELING OF MORE LIFE AND BROADER; THIS THING, THOUGH RISING OUT OF THE OLD LIFE. FITTED IN WELL WITH THE NEW. ABOVE ALL. THAT SENTENCE OF HERS RANG IN HIS HEAD. IT'S EXTRAVAGANCE PERHAPS GAINING PRE-EMINENCE FOR IT: "IF EVER THE TIME COMES. I SHALL REMEMBER!" THE TIME DID NOT SEEM LIKELY TO COME—SO FAR AS HE COULD INTERPRET THE VAGUE AND RATHER THREADBARE PHRASE—BUT HER RESOLUTION STIRRED HIS INTEREST. AND ENDED BY EXACTING HIS APPLAUSE. HE WAS GLAD THAT SHE HAD RESISTED. AND HAD NOT ALLOWED HERSELE TO BE TRAMPLED ON THOUGH THE THREAT WAS VERY EMPTY, ITS UTTERANCE SHOWED A HIGH SPIRIT, SUCH A SPIRIT AS HE STILL

WISHED TO PRESIDE OVER BLENT. IT WAS JUST WHAT HIS MOTHER MIGHT HAVE said, with an equal intensity of determination and an equal absence of DEFINITE PURPOSE. BUT THEN THE WHOLE PROCEEDINGS HAD BEEN JUST WHAT HE COULD IMAGINE HIS MOTHER BRINGING ABOUT, CONSEQUENTLY HE WAS RATHER BLIND TO THE EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTER OF THE STEP CECLLY HAD taken: so far he was of the same clay as his cousin. He was, however, NONE THE LESS OUTRAGED BY IT. AND NONE THE LESS SURE THAT HE HAD MET IT IN THE RIGHT WAY. YET HE DID NOT CONSIDER THAT THERE WAS ANY QUARREL BETWEEN THEM, AND HE MEANT TO SEE MORE OF HER: HE WAS ACCUSTOMED TO "SCENES" OCCURRING AND LEAVING NO PERMANENT ESTRANGEMENT OR BITTERNESS: THE STORMS BLEW OVER THE SAND. BUT THEY DID NOT IN THE END make much difference in the sand. THERE WAS WORK TO BE DONE-THE FIRST GRAVE CRITICAL BIT OF WORK HE HAD EVER HAD TO DO. THE FIRST REAL MEASURING OF HIMSELF AGAINST AN OPPONENT OF PROVED ABILITY. SO HE WOULD THINK NO MORE ABOUT THE GIRL. THIS RESOLVE DID NOT WORK. SHE, OR RATHER HER APPARITION, SEEMED TO INSIST THAT SHE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE WORK, WAS CONCERNED IN IT. OR AT LEAST MEANT TO LOOK ON AT IT. HARRY FOUND THAT HE HAD SMALL OBJECTION, OR EVEN A SORT OF WELCOME FOR HER PRESENCE. SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE MAN'S PLEASURE IN DOING THE THING. THERE WAS STILL SOME OF THE BOY'S DELIGHT IN SHOWING HE COULD DO IT. WHAT HAD PASSED YESTERDAY. PARTICULARLY THAT IDEA OF DOING THINGS FOR HIM WHICH HE HAD DETECTED AND RAGED AT, MADE IT ADDITIONALLY PLEASANT THAT HE SHOULD BE SEEN TO be capable of doing things for himself. All this was vague, but it was in his mind as he walked to Sloyd's offices. GRAVE AND ORTICAL! SLOYD'S NERVOUS EXCITEMENT AND UNEASY DEFERENCE

TOWARD IVER WERE THE ONLY INDICATIONS OF ANY SUCH THING. DUPLAY WAS THERE IN THE BACKGROUND, COOL AND EASY. IVER HIMSELF WAS INCLINED TO GOSSIP WITH HARRY AND TO CHAFF HIM ON THE FRESH DEPARTURE HE HAD

MADE, RATHER THAN TO SETTLE DOWN TO A DISCUSSION OF BLINKHAMPTON.

THAT WAS AFTER ALL A SMALL MATTER—SO HIS MANNER SEEMED TO ASSERT:

THAT WAS AFTER ALL A SMALL MATTER—SO HIS MANNER SEEMED TO ASSERT; HE HAD BEEN IN TOWN ANYHOW, SO HE DROPPED IN; DUPLAY HAD MADE A FOUND THAT HE COULD RESIST THE IMPRESSION HE WAS MEANT TO RECEIVE ONLY BY SAYING TO HIMSELF AS HE FACED HIS OLD FRIEND AND PRESENT ANTAGONIST: "BUT YOU'RE HERE—YOU'RE HERE—YOU'RE HERE!" IVER COULD neither gossip nor argue that fact away. "WELL NOW." SAID IVER WITH A GLANCE AT HIS WATCH. "WE MUST REALLY GET TO BUSINESS. YOU DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN BUNKHAMPTON, YOU GENTLEMEN, I SUPPOSE? YOU WANT TO LEAVE A LITTLE BETTER FOR YOUR VISIT, EH? QUITE SO. THAT'S THE PROPER THING WITH THE SEA-SIDE. BUT YOU CAN'T EXPECT TO FIND FORTUNES GROWING ON THE BEACH, SURELY MAJOR DUPLAY MISTOOK YOUR figures?" "Unless he mentioned fifty thousand, he did," said Harry firmly. "H'm. I DID YOU INJUSTICE, MAJOR—WITH SOME EXCUSE, THOUGH, SURELY, MR. Sloyd——?" He turned away from Harry as he spoke. "I beg pardon," interrupted Harry, "Am I to talk to Major Duplay?" IVER LOOKED AT HIM CURIOUSLY, "WELL, I'D RATHER TALK TO YOU, HARRY," HE SAID. "AND I'LL TELL YOU PLAINLY WHAT I THINK, MR SLOYD'S A YOUNG BUSINESS. man-so are vou." "I'm a baby." Harry agreed. "AND BLACKWAILING BIG PEOPLE ISN'T A GOOD WAY TO START." HE WATCHED HARRY, BUT HE DID NOT FORGET TO WATCH SLOYD TOO, "OF COURSE I USE THE

POINT OF IT IN HIS SCRUPULOUS MODESTY AS TO HIS OWN EXPERIENCE. HARRY

WORD IN A FIGURATIVE SENSE. THE ESTATE'S NOT WORTH HALF THAT MONEY TO
YOU; WE HAPPEN TO WANT IT—OH, I'M ALWAYS OPEN!—SO ——" HE GAVE
a shrug.

"Sorry to introduce new and immoral methods into business, Mr Iver. It
MIST BE PANEU. TO YOU AFTER ALL THESE YEARS." HARRY LAUGHED GOOD-

humoredly. "I shall corrupt the Major too!" he added.
"We'll give you five thousand for your bargain—twenty-five in all."

DURLAY WHISPERED TO MER. SLOYD WHISPERED TO HARRY. MER LISTENED ATTENTIVELY, HARRY WITH EVIDENT IMPATIENCE. "LET IT GO FOR THIRTY, DON'T make an enemy of him." had been Slovd's secret counsel.

"I SUGGESTED TO MAJOR DUPLAY THAT BEING AHEAD OF YOU WAS SO RARE AN

achievement that it ought to be properly recognized."

THAN A CERTAIN AMOUNT. IF WE PUT MONEY INTO BLINKHAMPTON, IT'S BECAUSE WE WANT IT TO COME OUT AGAIN. NOW THE CROP WILL BE LIMITED."

He paused. "I'll make you an absolutely final offer—thirty."

"My price is fifty," said Harry immovably.

"MY DEAR HARRY. THE SIMPLE FACT IS THAT THE BUSINESS WON'T STAND MORE

"Out of the question."

business.
"It simply cannot be done on the figures," Iver declared with genuine
Vexation. "We've worked it out. Harry, and it can't be done. If I showed

"ALL RIGHT." HARRY LIT A CIGARETTE WITH AN AIR OF HAVING FINISHED THE

VEXATION. "WE'VE WORKED IT OUT, HARRY, AND IT CAN'T BE DONE. IF I SHOWED OUR CALCULATIONS TO MR SLOYD, WHO IS, I'M SURE, WILLING TO BE reasonable——"

"YES. MR IVER. I AM. I AM. I HOPE, ALWAYS DESIROUS OF—BR—MEETING

GENTLEMEN HALF-WAY; AND NOTHING COULD GIVE ME GREATER PLEASURE THAN to do business with you, Mr Iver."

"UNFORTUNATELY YOU SEEM TO HAVE—A PARTINER," IVER OBSERVED. "NO, I'VE TOLD YOU THE MOST WE CAN GIVE." HE LEANT BACK IN HIS CHAIR. THIS TIME IT was he who had finished business.

"And I've told you the least we can take."
"It's HOPELESS. FIFTY! OH, WE SHOULD BE OUT OF POOKET. It'S REALLY
UNREASONABLE." HE WAS LOOKING AT SLOYD. "It'S TREATING ME AS AN

BLINKHAMPTON IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO ME. AND YOUR HOTEL AND SO ON WON'T FLOURISH MUCH IF I LEAVE MY TUMBLE-DOWN COTTAGES AND PIGSTIES JUST behind them. Will you put these papers together. Duplay?" THE MAJOR OBEYED LEISURELY. SLOYD WAS LICKING HIS LIPS AND LOCKING

ENEWY —AND I SHALL HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ACCEPT THE SITUATION.

acutely unhappy. "You're absolutely resolved. Harry?"

"Absolutely, Mr Iver,"

"WELL. I GIVE IT UP. IT'S BAD FOR ME. AND IT'S WORSE FOR YOU. IN ALL MY EXPERIENCE I NEVER WAS SO TREATED. YOU WON'T EVEN DISCUSS! IF YOU'D

SAID THRTY-FIVE, WELL, I'D HAVE LISTENED. IF YOU'D EVEN SAID FORTY, I'D

have----"

"I SAY, DONE FOR FORTY!" SAID HARRY QUIETLY, "I'D A SORT OF IDEA ALL THE TIME

that that might be your limit. I expect the thing really wouldn't stand fifty,

vou know. Oh. that's just my notion." IVER'S FACE WAS A STUDY. HE WAS SURPRISED. HE WAS ANNOYED, BUT HE

WAS ALSO SOMEWHAT AMUSED. HARRY'S ACTING HAD BEEN GOOD. THAT

OBSTINATE, UNCOMPROMISING IMMUTABLE FIFTY!—IVER HAD REALLY BELIEVED

IN IT. AND FORTY HAD BEEN HIS LIMIT—HIS EXTREME LIMIT. HE JUST SAW HIS WAY TO SQUARE HIS ACCOUNTS SATISFACTORILY IF HE WERE DRIVEN TO PAY THAT AS THE PENALTY OF ONE OF HIS. RARE MISTAKES. HE GLANCED AT SLOYD: RADIANT JOY AND RELIEF ILLUMINED THAT YOUNG MAN'S FACE. AS HE GAVE HIS

MUSTACHE AN UPWARD TWIRL. DUPLAY WAS SMILING-YES, SMILING, AT LAST IVER SMLED TOO. HARRY WAS GRAVE—NOT SOLEMN—BUT MERELY NOT SMLING BECALISE HE DID NOT PERCEIVE ANYTHING TO SMILE AT. NO DOUBT HE WAS gratified by the success of his tactics, and pleased that his formidable OPPONENT HAD BEEN DECEIVED BY THEM. BUT HE THOUGHT NOTHING OF WHAT IMPRESSED IVER MOST. THE TACTICS HAD BEEN, NO DOUBT, WILL CONCEIVED AND CARRIED OUT, BUT THEY WERE ORDINARY BNOUGH IN THEIR NATURE, IVER

STOPPED ON THE VERGE. BUT NOT BEYOND THE BOUNDARY WHERE A DEAL WAS POSSIBLE. MERE GUESSWORK COULD NOT ACCOUNT FOR THAT, NOR HAD HE COMMANDED THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION WHICH WOULD HAVE MADE THE CONCLUSION A MATTER OF ORDINARY INTELLIGENT CALCULATION. No. HE HAD INTUITIONS: HE MUST HAVE AN EYE. NOW EYES WERE RARE: AND WHEN THEY WERE FOUND THEY WERE TO BE USED. WER WAS MUCH SURPRISED AT FINDING ONE IN HARRY. YET IT MUST BE IN HARRY: IVER WAS CERTAIN THAT SLOYD HAD KNOWN NOTHING OF THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN OR OF THE DECISIVE FIGURE ON which his associate had pitched. "I'LL GIVE YOU FORTY," HE SAID AT LAST. "FOR THE WHOLE THING, LOCK, STOCK, and barrel-forty." "It's a bargain," said Harry, and Iver, with a sigh (for forty was the extreme figure), pushed back his chair and rose to his feet. "WE'VE GOT A GOOD MANY PLANS, SIR." SUGGESTED SLOYD, VERY ANXIOUS TO ESTABLISH PLEASANT RELATIONS. "I'M SURE WE SHOULD BE VERY GLAD IF YOU

HIMSELF, AND DOZENS OF MEN HE HAD MET, COULD HAVE EXECUTED THEM AS well. What struck him was that Harry knew how far he could go, that he

found them of any service." "You're very good, Mr Slovd, but----" "YOU MAY AS WELL HAVE A LOOK AT THEM," INTERRUPTED HARRY, "THERE ARE one or two good ideas. You'll explain them, won't you, Sloyd?"

SLOYD HAD ALREADY PLACED ONE IN IVER'S HAND, WHO GLANCED AT IT, TOOK ANOTHER, COMPARED THEM, AND AFTER A MINUTE'S PAUSE HELD BOTH OUT TO

the Maior. "WELL. DUPLAY, SUPPOSE YOU LOOK AT THEM AND HEAR ANYTHING THAT MR

Slovd is good enough to say, and report to me? You're at leisure?"

"CERTAINLY." SAID DUPLAY. HE WAS IN GOOD HUMOR, BETTER PERHAPS THAN

IF HIS CHIEF HAD PROVED MORE SIGNALLY SUCCESSFUL. HARRY TURNED TO HIM.

"Mina's very busy about something," smiled the Major.

"YES, SHE GENERALLY IS," SAID HARRY, FROWNING A LITTLE. "IF SHE TELLS YOU anything about me......."

"I'm not to believe it?"

"You may believe it, but not the way she puts it," laughed Harry.

"NOW THERE'S AN BID OF BUSINESS! WALK DOWN TO THE IMPERIUM WITH ME, HARRY, AND HAVE A BIT OF LUNCH. YOU'VE FARNED IT, BH? HOW DO YOU LIKE the feeling of making money?"

"Well, I think it might grow on a man. What's your experience?"

"SOMETIMES BETTER THAN THIS MORNING, OR I SHOULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN YOUR neighbor at Fairholme."

"I SAW MADAME ZABRISKA LAST NIGHT, AT LADY TRISTRAMS HOUSE, SHE'S

smilina.

forsaken vou. Maior?"

Iver was thoughtful.

Square.

figure?"

'I suppose I learnt to bluff a bit when I was at Blent."
"That was all Right, But—Well, How DID YOU PUT YOUR FINGER ON THE

THE TWO WALKED OFF TOGETHER, LEAVING DUPLAY AND SLOYD VERY AMCABLE.

"YOU DID THAT WELL," HE SAID AS THEY TURNED THE CORNER INTO BERKELEY

"I don't know. It looked like being about that, you know."

"It was very exactly that," admitted Iver.
"RATHER A SLEFFRISE TO FIND OUR FRIEND THE MAJOR GOING INTO BUSINESS WITH

"HE'LL BE USEFUL. I THINK, AND-WELL, I'M SHORT OF HELP." HE WAS EYING HARRY NOW, BUT HE SAID NO MORE ABOUT THE MORNING'S TRANSACTION TILL they reached the club. "Perhaps we shall find Neeld here." he remarked, as they went in. They did find Neeld, and also Lord Southend, the latter gentleman in a STATE OF DISTURBANCE ABOUT HIS CURRY. IT WAS NOT WHAT ANY MAN WOULD SERIOUSLY CALL A CURRY: IT WAS NO MORE THAN A FORTUITOUS CONCURRENCE OF mutton and rice. "It's an extraordinary thing." He observed to Iver. "That whenever WILMOT EDGE IS AWAY. THE CURRIES IN THIS CLUB GO TO THE DEVIL—TO THE devil. And he's always going off somewhere, confound him!" "HE CAN'T BE EXPECTED TO STAY AT HOME JUST TO LOOK AFTER YOUR CURRY." Iver suggested. "I SUPPOSE HE'S IN SOUTH AMERICA, OR SOUTH AFRICA, OR SOUTH

vou."

SOMEWHERE OR OTHER OUT OF REACH, WAITER!" THE EMBARRASSED SERVANT came, "When is Colonel Edge expected back?" "In a few weeks, I believe, my Lord,"

"Who's Chairman of the Committee while he's away?"

"Mr Gore-Marston, my Lord." "THERE-WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?" HE PUSHED AWAY HIS PLATE. "BRING ME SOME COLD BEEF," HE COMMANDED, AND THE WAITER BROUGHT IT WITH AN AIR

THAT SAID "ICHABOD" FOR THE IMPERIUM. "AS SOON AS EVER EDGE COMES

back, I shall draw his attention to the curry."

EVERYBODY BLSE HAD RATHER LOST THEIR INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT, NEELD AND HARRY WERE IN CONVERSATION, IVER SAT DOWN BY SOUTHEND, AND, WHILE

HISTORY OF THE MORNING. SOUTHEND TOO WAS CONCERNED IN BLINKHAMPTON. GRADUALLY THE CURRY WAS FORGOTTEN AS HE LISTENED TO THE STORY OF HARRY'S. victory. "Sort of young fellow who might be useful?" he suggested presently. "That's what I was thinking. He's guite ready to work too, I fancy." SOUTHEND REGARDED HIS ERIEND. HE WAS THINKING THAT IF THIS AND THAT HAPPENED—AND THEY WERE THINGS NOW WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF POSSIBILITY HASTILY AND IN IGNORANCE HE INCLUDED JANIE IN THE SCOPE OF THIS SUPPOSED REGRET. BUT AT THIS MOMENT THE GUILTY AND INCOMPETENT MR GORE-MARSTON HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO COME IN SOUTHEND. ALL HIS GRIEVANCE REVIVED. FELL ON HIM TOOTH AND NAIL. HIS DEFENCE WAS FEEBLE: HE ADMITTED THAT HE KNEW NEXT TO NOTHING OF CURRIES, AND-YES, THE cook did get careless when Wilmot Edge's vigilant eye was removed. "HE'LL BE HOME SOON," GORE-MARSTON PLEADED, "I'VE HAD A LETTER FROM HIM: HE'S JUST GOT BACK TO CIVILIZATION AFTER BEING OUT IN THE WILDERNESS. shooting, for six weeks. He'll be here in a month now, I think." "We shall have to salary him to stay," growled Southend.

LUNCH WAS PREPARING. ENDEAVORED TO DISTRACT HIS MIND BY GIVING HIM A

"We shall have to salary him to stay," growled Southend.

HARRY WAS AMUSED AT THIS LITTLE EPISODE, AND LISTENED SMILING.

POSSESSING A KNOWLEDGE OF CURRIES SEEMED AN ODD WAY TO ACQUIRE
IMPORTANCE FOR A FELLOW-CREATURE, A STRANCE REASON FOR A MAN'S RETURN
BEING DESIRED. HE KNEW WHO WILMOT EDGE WAS, AND IT WAS FUNNY TO
hear OF HIM AGAIN IN CONNECTION WITH CURRIES. AND CURRIES SEEMED THE

ONLY REASON WHY ANYBODY SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN COLONEL EDGE'S RETURN. NOT TILL THEY MET AGAIN IN THE SMOKING-ROOM WERE THE CURRIES finally forgotten.

IN LATER DAYS HARRY CAME TO LOOK BACK ON THAT AFTERNOON AS THE BEGINNING OF MANY NEW THINGS FOR HIM. IVER AND SOUTHEND TALKED; OLD MR NEELD SAT BY, LISTENING WITH THE INTEREST OF A MAN WHO FEELS HE HAS MISSED SOMETHING IN LIFE AND WOULD FAIN LEARN. EVEN THOUGH HE IS TOO OLD TO TURN THE KNOWLEDGE TO ACCOUNT. HARRY FOUND HIMSELF LISTENING TOO. but in a different way. THEY WERE NOT TALKING IDLY: THEY TALKED FOR HIM. THAT MUCH HE SOON DISCERNED. AND THEY WERE NOT OFFERING TO HELP HIM. HIS VIGILANT PRIDE. STILL SORE FROM THE BLOW THAT CEOLY HAD DEALT IT. WAS ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR

THAT. BUT THE TRIUMPH OF THE MORNING. NO LESS THAN THE MANNER OF THE

MEN. REASSURED HIM. IT IS IN ITS WAY AN EXCITING MOMENT FOR A YOUNG MAN WHEN HE FIRST RECEIVES PROOF THAT HIS SENIORS. THE MEN OF ACTUAL

ACHEVENENT AND ADMITTED ABILITY. THINK THAT THERE IS SOMETHING IN HIM. THAT HE CAN BE OF SERVICE TO THEM, THAT IT IS IN HIS POWER, IF IT BE IN HIS will, to emerge from the ruck and take a leading place. Harry was glad FOR HIMSELE: HE WOULD HAVE BEEN TOLICHED HAD HE SPARED TIME TO

OBSERVE HOW DELIGHTED OLD NEELD WAS ON HIS ACCOUNT. THEY MADE HIM NO GIFT: THEY ASKED WORK FROM HIM. AND IVER. TRUE TO HIS TRADITIONS AND INGRAINED IDEAS. ASKED MONEY AS A GUARANTEE FOR THE WORK. "YOU GIVE ME BACK WHAT I'M GOING TO PAY YOU." HE SAID. "AND SINCE YOU'VE TAKEN

SUCH AN INTEREST IN BLINKHAMPTON. TURN TO AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN MAKE OF IT. IT LOOKED AS IF THERE WAS A NOTION OR TWO WORTH CONSIDERING IN

those plans of yours."

Southend agreed to every suggestion with an emphatic nod. But there WAS SOMETHING MORE IN HIS MIND. WITH EVERY EVIDENCE OF CAPABILITY THAT HARRY SHOWED. EVEN WITH EVERY INCREASE IN THE CHANCES OF HIS

ATTAINING POSITION AND WEALTH FOR HIMSELF, THE PROSPECT OF SUCCESS IN THE OTHER SCHEME—THE SCHEME STILL SECRET—GREW BRIGHTER. THE

THOUGHT OF THAT QUEER LITTLE WOMAN MADAME ZABRISKA. HARRY'S

CHAMPION, CAME INTO HIS MIND. HE WOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL HER. IF

EVER THEY MET AGAIN AT LADY EVENSWOOD'S. HE WOULD HAVE SOMETHING

Colonel Wilmot Edge, who derived his importance from it.

TO TELL LADY EVENSWOOD HERSELF TOO. HE QUITE FORGOT HIS CURRY—AND

ACTIVITY WAS BEFORE HIM. THE DAY HAD MORE THAN FULFILLED ITS PROMSE. WHAT HAD SEEMED ITS CREAT TRILIMPH APPEARED NOW TO BE VALUABLE ONLY AS AN INTRODUCTION AND A PRELIDE TO SOMETHING LARGER AND MORE REAL. ALREADY HE WAS LOOKING BACK WITH SOME SURPRISE ON THE EXTREME GRAVITY WHICH HE HAD ATTACHED TO HIS LITTLE BLINKHAMPTON SPECILIATION. HE GREW VERY READILY WHERE HE WAS GIVEN ROOM TO GROW: AND ALL THE WHILE THERE WAS THE IMPULSE TO SHOW HIMSELF-AND OTHERS TOO-THAT HE DID NOT DEPEND ON BLENT OR ON HAVING BLENT. BLENT OR NO BLENT, HE WAS A MAN WHO COULD MAKE HIMSELE FELT. HE WAS ON HIS TRIAL STILL OF COURSE. BUT HE DID NOT DOUBT OF THE VERDICT. WHEN A THING DEPENDED FOR SUCCESS OR FAILURE ON HARRY ALONE. HARRY HAD NEVER BEEN IN THE HABIT OF DOUBTING THE RESULT. THE MAJOR HAD NOTICED THAT TRAIT IN DAYS WHICH SEEMED NOW OUTE LONG AGO: THE MAJOR HAD NOT LIKED IT. BUT IN THE affairs of life it probably had some value. EXCEPT FOR ONE THING HE SEEMED TO BE WELL SETTLED INTO HIS NEW EXISTENCE PEOPLE HAD STOPPED STARING AT HIM THEY HAD ALMOST CEASED TO TALK OF HIM. HE WAS RAPIDLY BECOMING A BYGONE STORY. EVEN

NOTHING WAS SETTLED; THERE WERE ONLY SUGGESTIONS FOR HARRY TO THINK OVER. BUT HE WAS LEFT QUITE CLEAR THAT EVERYTHING DEPENDED ON HIMSELF ALONE. THAT HE HAD ONLY TO WILL AND TO WORK, AND A CARRER OF PROSPEROUS.

CASED TO TALK OF HIM THE WAS APPLLY BELOWING A BYCONE STORM. EVEN TO HIMSELF IT SEEMED MONTHS SINCE HE HAD BEEN TRISTRAM OF BLENT; HE HAD NO IDEA THAT ANY PLANS WERE AFOOT CONCERNING HIM WHICH FOUND THER BASIS AND JUSTIFICATION IN HIS HAVING FILLED THAT POSITION. EXCEPT FOR ONE THING HE WAS QUIT OF IT ALL. BUT THAT REMAINED, AND IN SUCH STRENGTH AS TO COLOR ALL. THE NEW EXISTENCE. THE BUSINESS OF THE DAY HAD NOT DRIVEN OUT THE VISIONS OF THE MORNING. REAL THINGS SHOULD DRIVE OUT FANDIES; IT IS SERIOUS, PERHAPS DEPLORABLE, WHEN THE REAL THINGS SEEM

DRIVEN OUT THE VISIONS OF THE MORNING. REAL THINGS SHOULD DRIVE OUT FANCIES; IT IS SERIOUS, PERHAPS DEPLORABLE, WHEN THE REAL THINGS SEEM TO DEPIVE AT LEAST HALF THEIR IMPORTANCE FROM THE RELATION THAT THEY BEAR TO THE FANCIES. PERHAPS THE PROPER CONCLUSION WOULD BE THAT IN SUCH A

TO THE FANOES. PERHAPS THE PROPER CONCLUSION WOULD BE THAT IN SUCH A case the fancies too have their share of reality.

"NELD AND I GO DOWN TO FAIRHOLME TO MORROW, HARRY," SAID WER AS they parted. "No chance of seeing you down there, I suppose?"

"REALLY, I DON'T SUPPOSE I SHALL EVER GO THERE AGAIN," HE ANSWERED WITH a laugh. "Off with the old love, you know, Mr Neeld!"
"Oh, don't say that," protested Southend.

THERE WAS A HINT OF SOME MEANING IN HIS SPEECH WHICH MADE HARRY

NEELD THOUGHT THE QUESTION RATHER BRUTAL; IVER'S FEELINGS WERE NOT PERHAPS OF THE FINEST. BUT HARRY WAS AFFARENTLY UNCONSCIOUS OF

anything that grated.

turn to him with quick attention.
"Blent's a mere memory to me," he declared.

THE THREE BLOER MEN WERE SILENT, BUT THEY SEEMED TO RECEIVE WHAT HE

said with scepticism.
"Well. that's the only way, isn't it?" he asked.

"JUST AT PRESENT, I SUPPOSE," SOUTHEND SAID TO HIM IN A LOW VOICE, AS he shook hands.

THESE FEW WORDS, WITH THE SUBDUED HINT THEY CARRIED, REINFORCED THE STRENGTH OF THE VISIONS. HARRY WAS RATHER FULL OF HIS OWN WILL AND PROUD OF HIS OWN POWERS JUST NOW—PERHAPS WITH SOME LITTLE EXCUSE. BUT HE BEGAN, THANKS TO THE BEARING OF THESE MEN AND TO THE OBSTINATE THOUGHTS OF HIS OWN MIND, TO FEEL, STILL DIMLY, THAT IT WAS A DIFFICULT THING.

THOUGHTS OF HS OWN MIND, TO FEEL, STILL DIMLY, THAT IT WAS A DIFFICULT THING TO FORGET AND TO GET RID OF THE WHOLE OF A LIFE, TO MAKE AN ENTIRELY FRESH START, TO BE QUITE A DIFFERENT MAN. UNSUSPECTED CHAINS REVEALED THEMSELVES WITH EACH NEW MOTION TOWARD LIBERTY. ABSOLUTE DETACHMENT HAD BEEN HS IDEAL. HE AWOKE WITH A START TO THE FACT THAT HE WAS STILL, IN THE MAIN, LIVING WITH AND MOVING AMONG FEORLE WHO SWACKED STRONG OF BLENT, WHO HAD KNOWN HIM AS TRISTRAM OF BLENT, WHOSE LIVES HAD CROSSED HIS BECAUSE HE WAS ADDIE TRISTRAMS SON. THAT WAS TRUE OF EVEN HIS NEW ACQUAINTANCE LADY EVENSWOOD—TRUER STILL OF NEELD. OF SOUTHERD, AYE OF SLOYD AND THE MAJOR—MOST TRUE OF

EVEN LOGIC RATHER AT SEA. THE DISADVANTAGE IS THAT THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF heroic or dramatic conduct are materially increased.

YES, HE WAS NOT TO ESCAPE, NOT TO FORGET. THAT DAY ONE SCENE MORE AWAITED HIM WHICH ROSE OUT OF BLENT AND BELONGED TO BLENT. THE IMP MADE AN APPOINTMENT BY TELEGRAM, AND THE IMP CAME. HARRY COULD NO LONGER REGARD HIS BACHELOR-CHAMBERS AS ANY BARRIER AGAINST THE INCURSIONS OF EXCITED YOUNG WOMEN. ANYTHING THAT CONCERNED THE TRISTRAMS SEEMED NATURALLY ANTIPATHETIC TO CONVIDITIONS. HE SURREDUBRED AND LET MINA IN; THAT HE WANTED TO SEE HER—HER FOR WANT OF A BETTER—WAS NOT RECOGNIZED BY HIM. SHE WAS IN A GREAT TEMPER, AND HE WAS SOON INCLINED TO REGRET HS ACCESSIBILITY. STILL HE BNDURED; FOR IT WAS AN ABSOLUTELY FINAL INTERVIEW. SHE SAID. SHE HAD JUST COME TO

HS COUSIN CECILY. THIS INTERDEPENDENCE OF ITS PERIODS IS WHAT WELDS
LIFE INTO A WHOLE, EVEN ABLE AND WILFUL YOUNG MEN HAVE, FOR GOOD AND
EVIL. TO RECKON WITH IT. OTHERWISE MORALITY WOULD BE IN A BAD CASE. AND

"Oh, you can't get out of it like that! You know that isn't the point."
"WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THEN?" CRIED HARRY, "THERE'S NOTHING ILSE THE

TELL HIM WHAT SHE THOUGHT OF HIM—AND THERE WAS AN END OF IT. THEN SHE
WAS GOING BACK TO MERRON AND SHE HOPED. CECLY WAS COMING WITH

"Certainly not," he agreed. "But what's the matter, Madame Zabriska?
YOU DON'T COMPLAIN THAT I DIDN'T ACCEPT—THAT I COULDN'T FALL IN WITH MY

her. He—Harry—would not be there anyhow!

cousin's peculiar ideas?"

matter, is there?"
Mina could hardly sit still for rage; she was on pins.

"NOTHING ELSE?" SHE CATHERED HERSELF TOGETHER FOR THE ATTACK. "WHAT

DID YOU TAKE HER TO DINNER AND TO THE THEATRE FOR? WHAT DID YOU BRING her home for?"

"I wanted to be friendly. I wanted to soften what I had to say."

"IF YOU'LL PHLOSOPHIZE ON THE SUBJECT OF MEN—ABOUT WHICH YOU KNOW A lot, of course—I'll listen with pleasure."

"It'S THE HORRIBLE SELFISHNESS OF THE THING, WHY DIDN'T YOU SEND HER AWAY DIRECTLY? OH, NO, YOU KEPT HER, YOU MADE YOURSELF PLEASANT, YOU MADE

"You never thought of anything but yourself all the way through. You were lecturing her? Oh, no! You were posing and posturing. Being very fine and very heroic! And then at the end you turned round and— And as good as struck her in the face. Oh, I hope she'll never steak to

her think you liked her-"

"Did she send you to say this?"

you, and I've done it."

"What?"

you again!"

"To soften it! Not you! Shall I tell you what you wanten, Mr Tristram? Sometimes men seem to know so little about themselves!"

"Of course not."

"YES, OF COURSE NOT! YOU'RE RIGHT THERE. IF IT HAD HAPPENED TO BE IN ANY way your business——"

"AH!" CRIED THE IMP TRIUMPHANTLY. "YOU'VE NO ANSWER. SO YOU TURN ROUND

AND ABUSE ME! BUT I DON'T CARE. I MEANT TO TELL YOU WHAT I THOUGHT OF

"A post-card would have done it as well," Harry suggested.

"But you've gone too far, oh yes, you have If you ever change your mind——"
"What about? Oh. don't talk nonsense. Madame Zabriska."

"It's not nonsense. You behaved even worse than I think if you're not at

Harry threw a quick glance at her.
"That would be very unlucky for me," he remarked.

"Very—now," said the Imp with every appearance of delight.

"London will be dull without you, Madame Zabriska."

"I'm not going to take any more trouble about you, anyhow."

least half in love with her."

He rose and walked over to her.

his pet grievance.

"In the BND," He said more seriously, "What's your complaint against me?"

"You've made Cecily terribly unhappy."

"I couldn't help it. She—she did an impossible thing."

"AFTER WHICH YOU MADE HER SPEND THE EVENING WITH YOU! EVEN A Tristram must have had a reason for that."

"I've told you. I felt friendly and I wanted her to be friendly. And I like her. The whole thing's a ludicrous trifle." He raused a moment and added: "I'm sorry if she's distressed."

"You've made everything impossible—that's all."

"I DON'T UNDERSTAND. IT SO HAPPENS THAT TO-DAY ALL SORTS OF THINGS HAVE begun to seem possible to me. Perhaps you've seen your uncle?"

begun to seem possible to me. Perhaps you've seen your uncle?"
"YES, I HAVE,—AND—AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SPLENDID IF YOU HADN'T

treated her as you did."

"You hint at something I know nothing about." He was growing ancry
again. "I really believe I could manage my own affairs." He returned to

MSCHEVOUS PLEASURE IN PUZZLING HIM OVERCAME HER WRATH. "YOU'LL know what you've done soon."

"Shall I? How shall I find it out?"

"You'll be sorry when—when a certain thing happens."

"YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND? WILL. YOU WILL SOON." SHE GREW COOLER AS HER.

He threw himself into a chair with a peevish laugh.

"I confess your riddles rather bore me. Is there any answer to this one?"

"Yes, very soon. I've been to see Lady Evenswood."

"She knows the answer, does she?"
"PERHARS." HER ANNATION SUDDENLY LEFT HER "BUT I SUPPOSE IT'S ALL NO

use now," she said dolefully.

THEY SAT SLENT FOR A MINUTE OR TWO, HARRY SEEMING TO FALL INTO A FIT OF abstraction.

"What did you mean by saying I oughtin't to have taken her to dinner and so on?" he asked, as Mina rose to go.

She shook her head. "I've nothing more to say," she declared.

"YES, I DO," SHE SNAPPED VICIOUSLY AS SHE TURNED TOWARD THE DOOR. BUT she looked back at him before she went out

"And you say I'm half in love with her?"

she looked back at him before she went out.

"As FAR AS THAT COES," HE SAID SLOWLY, "I'M NOT SURE YOU'RE WRONG,

Madame Zabriska. But I could never marry her."

The Imp launched a prophecy, confidently, triumphantly, maliciously.

to thank for it too! Good-by!"
SHE WAS GONE. HARRY SAT DOWN AND SLOWLY FILLED AND LIT HS PIPE. IT WAS PROBABLY ALL NONSBNSE, BUT AGAIN HE RECOLLECTED CEOLY'S WORDS: "IF ever the time comes, I shall remember!"
WHATEVER MOHT BE THE STATE OF HIS FEELINGS TOWARD HER, OR OF HERS TOWARD HIM, A SATISFACTORY OUTCOME SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE AND
•
SOMEHOW THIS NOTION HAD THE EFFECT OF SPOILING THE SUCCESS OF THE DAY
FOR HARRY TRISTRAM, SO THAT AMONG THE MY'S WHIRI ING WORDS THERE WAS

PERHAPS A GRAIN OR TWO OF WISDOM, AT LEAST HIS TALK WITH HER DID NOT

make Harry's visions less constant or less intense.

XXII

An Insult to the Blood

IT COULD NOT BE DENIED THAT BLINK-HAMPTON WAS AMONG THE THINGS WHICH ARCSE OUT OF BLENT. TO ACKNOWLEDGE EVEN SO MUCH HARRY FELT TO BE A SIUR ON his independence, on the new sense of being able to do things FOR HINSELF IN WHICH HIS PRIDE, ROBBED OF ITS OLD OPPORTUNITIES, WAS TAKING REFUGE AND FINDING CONSOLATION. IT WAS THANKS TO HINSELF ANYHOW THAT IT HAD SO ARISEN, FOR IVER WAS NOT THE MAN TO MINGLE BUSINESS AND SENTIMENT. HARRY SNATCHED THIS COMPORT, AND THREW HIS ENERGIES INTO THE WORK, BOTH AS A TRIAL OF HIS POWERS AND AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST HIS THOUGHTS. HE WENT DOWN TO THE PLACE AND STAYED A WEEK. THE RESULT OF HIS VISIT WAS A REPORT WHICH IVER SHOWED TO SOUTHEND WITH A VERY SIGNIFICANT NOD; EVEN THE MISTAKES IN IT, THEMSELVES INEVITABLE FROM WANT OF EXPERIENCE, WERE THE ERRORS OF A LARGE MIND. THE TOUCH OF DOCUMENTSM DID NOT DISPLEASE A MAN WHO VALUED SELF-CONFIDENCE above all other qualities.

"The lad will do; he'll make his way," said Iver.

Southend smiled. Lads who are equal to making their own way may go very far if they are given such a start as he had in contemplation for Harry. But would things go right? Southend had received an incoherent but decidedly despairing letter from Mina Zabriska. He put it in the fire, saying nothing to Lady Evenswood, and nothing, of course, to Mir Disney. In the bid there was rethers no absolutely necessary connection between the two parts of the softene—that which concerned the Lady, and that which between on the

Yet the first would make the second so much more easy!

AND ROBERT WAS LIKELY, IF WORRIED, TO STATE THE FACT WITH HIS OWN MERCILESS VIGOR, AND WITH THAT TO SAY GOOD-BY TO THE WHOLE AFFAIR. THE ONLY PERSON SERCUSLY ANCRY AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S "DAWDLING," WAS MINA ZABRISKA; AND SHE HAD BNJOYED NO CHANGE OF TELLING HIM SO. TO MAKE SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HER WAS TOO HAZARDOUS AN EXPERIMENT; IT MIGHT HAVE TURNED OUT WELL—ONE COULD NEVER TELL WITH ROBERT—BUT ON the whole it was not to be risked.

WHAT LADY EVENSWOOD WOULD NOT VENTURE, FORTUNE DARED. MINA HAD BEEN SEENG SIGHTS—IT WAS AUGUST NOW, A SUITABLE MONTH FOR THE TASK—AND ONE EVENING, ABOUT HALF-PAST SIX, SHE LANDED HER WEARY BONES ON A SEAT IN ST JAMES'S PARK FOR A FEW MOMENTS' REST BEFORE SHE FACED THE UNDERGROUND. THE FLACE WAS VERY EMPTY. THE FEW PEOPLE

MR DISNEY HAD GIVEN NO SIGN YET. THERE WAS A CRISIS SOMEWHERE ABROAD, AND A COLLEAGUE UNDERSTOOD TO BE SELF-OPINONATED; THERE WAS A CRISIS IN THE CHURCH, AND A BISHOPRIC VACANT. LADY EVENSWOOD WAS OF OPINON THAT THE LEAST ATTEMPT TO HURRY ROBERT WOULD BE FATAL. THERE WERE AFTER ALL. LIMTS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF HARRY TRISTRAM'S CASE.

THE HANDSOME MAN LISTENED WITH DEFENSIVE, BUT FROWNED AND seemed troubled. Suddenly the pair stopped.

"I must get back to the House," she heard the handsome man say.

"WELL THINK IT OVER. TRY TO SEE IT IN THAT LIGHT." SAID DISNEY, HOLDING OUT

THERE LAY FOR THE MOST PART ASLEEP—MORKMEN WITH THE DAY'S LABOR DONE. PRESENTLY SHE SAW TWO MEN WALKING SLOWLY TOWARD HER FROM THE DIRECTION OF WESTIMISTER. ONE WAS TALL AND SLICHT, HANDSOME AND DISTINGUISHED IN APPEARANCE, IN THE OTHER SHE RECOGNIZED THE RUGGED AWKWARD MAN WHOM SHE HAD MET AT LADY EVENSWOOD'S. HE WAS TALKING HARD, HITTING HIS PIST INTO THE PAUM OF HIS OTHER HAND SOMETIMES.

"Well, think it over. Try to see it in that light," said Disney, holding out his hand. The other took it, and then turned away. The episode would have been worth a good paragraph and a dozen conjectures to a

REPORTER; THE HANDSOME MAN WAS THE SELF-OPINONATED COLLEAGUE, AND THE WORDS MINA HAD HEARD, WERE THEY NOT CLEAR PROOF OF DISSENSIONS IN

COLLEAGUE, BUT DOWN ON THE GROUND: HIS THOUGHTS MADE HIM LINCONSCIOLIS OF THINGS EXTERNAL. MINA GLOWED WITH EXCITEMENT. HE WAS

DISNEY STOOD STOCK-STILL ON THE PATH, NOT LOOKING AFTER HIS RECALCITRANT.

NOT AN AWKWARD MAN TO HER: HE WAS A GREAT AND SURPRISING FACT. A WONDERFUL INSTITUTION, THE MORE WONDERFUL BECAUSE (TO LOOK AT HIM) HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A SUPERIOR MECHANIC WHO HAD DROPPED SIXPENCE AND WAS SCANNING THE GROUND FOR IT. SHE WAS REALLY APPALLED. BUT HER OLD INSTINCT AND HABIT OF INTERFERENCE. OF NOT LETTING THINGS GO BY HER WITHOUT LAYING AT LEAST A FINGER ON THEM, WORKED IN HER TOO. HOW LONG WOULD HE STAND THERE MOTIONLESS? AS IF THE GROUND COULD TELL HIM ANYTHING! YET SHE WAS NOT IMPATIENT OF HIS STILLNESS. IT WAS GOOD TO SIT

the Cabinet?

and watch him.

SLACKENED PACE A MOMENT. AND THEN, AFTER AN APPARENT HESITATION. LIFTED HS CAP. THERE WAS NO SIGN THAT DISNEY SAW HIM. SAVE THAT HE TOUCHED HIS HAT IN ALMOST UNCONSCIOUS ACKNOWLEDGMENT. THE ARTISAN WENT BY, BUT STOPPED. TURNED TO LOOK AGAIN, AND EXCHANGED AN

AN ARTISAN SWUNG BY, HIS TOOLS OVER HIS BACK, MINA SAW THE SUDDENLY AWAKENED ATTENTION WITH WHICH HIS HEAD TURNED TO DISNEY. HE

AMUSED SMILE WITH MINA. HE GLANCED ROUND TWICE AGAIN BEFORE HE was out of sight. Mina sighed in enjoyment. WITH A QUICK JERK OF HIS HEAD DISNEY BEGAN TO WALK ON SLOWLY. FOR AN INSTANT MINA DID NOT KNOW WHAT SHE WOULD DO: THE FEAR AND THE

ATTRACTION STRUGGLED. THEN SHE JUMPED UP AND WALKED TOWARD HIM. HER manner TRIED TO ASSERT THAT SHE HAD NOT NOTICED HIM. SHE WAS ALMOST BY HIM. SHE GAVE A COUGH. HE LOOKED UP, WOULD HE KNOW HER? WOULD HE REMEMBER ASKING-NO. DIRECTING-MY LORD HIS SECRETARY TO WRITE TO HER. AND HAD HE READ WHAT SHE WROTE? HE WAS LOOKING AT HER. SHE dared a hurried little bow. He came to a stand-still again.

"Yes, yes?" he said questioningly.

"Oh, yes." His voice sounded a little disappointed. "I met you at——?"
"AT LADY EVENSWOOD'S, MR DISNEY." TAKING COURAGE SHE ADDED, "I sent what you wanted?"

"Madame Zabriska, Mr Disnev."

as bad as can be. Mr Disnev."

"What I wanted?"

"YES." THE VOICE SOUNDED NOW AS IF HE HAD PLACED HER. HE SMILED A LITTLE. "I REMEMBER IT ALL NOW, I READ IT THE OTHER MORNING." HE NOODED AT

"Yes. What you wanted me to write, about—about the Tristrams."

HER, AS IF THAT FINISHED THE MATTER. BUT MINA DID NOT MOVE. "I'M BUSY JUST NOW," HE ADDED, "BUT—WELL, HOW'S YOUR SIDE OF THE AFFAIR GOING ON, MADDAME ZABITISKA? I'Ve heard nothing from my cousin about that."

"It's just wonderful to see you like this!" the Imp blurted out.

That amused him; she saw the twinkle in his eye.

"Never mind me. Tell me about the Tristram cousins."

"Oh, you are thinking of it then?" "I never tell what I'm thinking about. That's the only reason people think

The verter what find thinking about. That's the only reason people think
me clever. The cousins?"

"OH. THAT'S ALL DREADELL. AT LEAST | BELIEVE THEY ARE—THEY WOULD BE—IN

LOVE, BUT—BUT—MR TRISTRAMS SO DIFFICULT, SO OBSTINATE, SO PROUD. I don't suppose you understand——"

"YOU'RE THE SECOND PERSON WHO'S TOLD ME I CAN'T UNDERSTAND, IN THE LAST HALF-HOUR." HE WAS SMLING NOW, AS HE COURLED MINA AND THE

handsome recalcitrant colleague in his protest. "I'm not sure of it."

"AND SHE'S BEEN SILLY. AND HE'S BEEN HORRID. AND JUST NOW—WELL. II'S ALL

"Is ri? You must get it better than that, you know, before I can bo anything. Good-night."

"Oh, stop, do stop! Do say what you mean!"

"I SHANT DO ANYTHING OF THE KIND. YOU MAY TELL LADY EVENSWOOD WHAT

l've said and she'll tell you what I mean." "Oh, but please-----"

"IF YOU STOP ME ANY LONGER, I SHALL SEND YOU TO THE TOWER. TELL LADY
EVENSWOOD AND SOUTHEND. IF I DIDN'T DO MY BUSINESS BETTER THAN YOU

DO YOURS ——!" HE SHRUGGED HS SHOULDERS WITH A GOOD-NATURED RUDENESS. "GOOD-NIGHT," HE SAID AGAIN, AND THIS TIME MINA DARED NOT STOP HM. TWENTY YARDS FURTHER ON HE HALTED ONCE MORE OF HS OWN ACCORD AND FELL INTO THOUGHT. MINA WATCHED HM TILL HE MOVED ON AGAIN.

SLOWLY MAKING HIS WAY ACROSS THE MALL AND TOWARD ST JAMES'S STREET.

A GREAT THING HAD HAPPENED TO HER.—SHE FELT THAT; AND SHE HAD NEWS
TOO THAT SHE WAS TO TELL TO SOUTHEND AND LADY EVENSWOOD. THERE WAS
considerable unsettlement in the Imp's mind that night.

THE NEXT DAY FOUND HER AT LADY EVENSWOOD'S. THE OLD LADY AND

THE NEXT DAY FOUND HER AT LADY EVENSWOODS. THE OLD LADY AND SOUTHEND (WHO HAD BEEN SUMMONED ON MINA'S COMMAND—CERTAINLY MINA WAS CETTING UP IN THE WORLD) UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY. THEY NODDED wise heads.

"I was always inclined to think that Robert would take that view."

"He fears that the Bearsdale case won't carry him all the way. Depend

upon it, that's what he feels."

"Well, there was the doubt there, you see."

something exceedingly meritorious.

MINA WAS RATHER TIRED OF THE DOUBT IN THE BEARSDALE CASE. IT WAS ALWAYS CROPPING UP AND BBING MENTIONED AS THOUGH IT WERE

"AND IN POOR ADDIE'S CASE OF COURSE THERE—WELL, THERE WASN'T,"
PROCEEDED LADY EVENSWOOD WITH A SIGH. "SO ROBERT FEELS THAT IT
might be thought——"

"THE PEOPLE WITH CONSCIENCES WOULD BE AT HIM, I SUPPOSE," SAID
Southend scomfully.

"Oh, I see!" cried the Imp.
"Then he would feel able to act. It would look merely like putting things

"But if the marriage came off——"

back as they were, you see, Mina."
"Do you think he means the viscounty?" asked Southend.

"It would be so much more convenient. And they could have had an earldom once before if they'd liked."

"Oh, twice," corrected Southend confidently.
"I know it's said, but I don't believe it. You mean in 1816?"

"Yes. Everybody knows that they could have had it from Mr Pitt."

"Well, George, I don't believe about 1816. At least my father heard Lord Liverpool say——"

Lord Liverpool say——"
"OH, DEAR ME!" MURMURED THE IMP. THIS HISTORICAL INQUIRY WAS NETTHER
COMPREHENSIBLE NOR INTERESTING. BUT THEY DISCUSSED IT EAGERLY FOR

COMPREHENSIBLE NOR INTERESTING. BUT THEY DISCUSSED IT EAGERLY FOR SOME MINUTES BEFORE AGREEING THAT, WHEREVER THE TRUTH LAY, A VISCOUNTY COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED OUT OF THE WAY FOR THE TRISTRAMS—LEGITIMATE and proper Tristrams, be it understood.

and proper Tristrams, be it understood.

"AND THAT'S WHERE THE MATCH WOULD BE OF DEOSIVE VALUE," LADY

"AND THAT'S WHERE THE MATCH WOULD BE OF DECISIVE VALUE," LADY Evenswood concluded.

"Disney said as much evidently. So you understood, Madame

"WELL, I'M NOT SURE THAT OUR FRIEND IVER ISN'T KEEPING THAT FOR HIMSELF," smiled Southend.
"OH, HE CAN BE LORD BRICKS AND PUTTY," SHE SUGGESTED, LAUCHING. BUT

"He could take Blentmouth, you know, It's all very simple,"

THERE SEEMED IN HER WORDS A DEPLORABLE HINT OF SCORN FOR THAT PROCESS
BY WHICH THE VITALITY (NOT TO SAY THE SOLVENCY) OF THE BRITISH ARISTOCRACY
IS NOTORIOUSLY MAINTAINED. "BLENTIMOUTH WOULD DO VERY WELL FOR HARRY
Tristram."

"Well then, what's to be done?" asked Southend.

"We must give him a hint, George."

"I suppose so, I've told you what he said."

"HAVE WE BNOUGH TO GO UPON? SUPPOSE DISNEY TURNED ROUND and......"

"ROBERT WON'T DO THAT. BESIDES, WE NEEDN'T PLEDGE ANYTHING. WE CAN JUST BUT THE CASE." SHE SMUED THOUGHTBULY. "I'M STUL NOT QUITE SURE HOW.

Mr Tristram will take it, you know."

"How he'll take it? He'll jump at it, of course."

"The girl or the title. George?"

"Well, both together, Won't he, Madame Zabriska?"

me gm er ale aae, eeeliger

7abriska?"

Mina thought great things of the girl, and even greater, if vaguer, of the title

title.

"I SHOULD JUST THINK SO," SHE REPLIED COMPLACENTLY. THERE WAS A LIMT TO the perversity even of the Tristrams.

"WE MUSTN'T PUT IT TOO BALDLY." OBSERVED SOUTHEND, DANGLING HIS eveglass. "OH. HE'LL THINK MORE OF THE THING ITSELF THAN OF HOW WE PUT IT." LADY Evenswood declared FROM HER KNOWLEDGE OF HARRY, THE IMP WAS EXACTLY OF THAT OPINON, BUT SOUTHEND WAS FOR DIPLOMACY: INDEED WHAT PLEASURE IS THERE IN MANGELVRING SCHEWES IF THEY ARE NOT TO BE CONDUCTED WITH DELICACY? A POLICY THAT CAN BE DEFINED ON A POSTAGE STAMP HAS NO ATTRACTION FOR ingenious minds, although it is usually the most effective with a nation. HARRY TRISTRAM RETURNED FROM BLINKHAMPTON IN A STATE OF INTELLECTUAL SATISFACTION MARRED BY A SENSE OF EMOTIONAL EMPTINESS. HE HAD BEEN VERY ACTIVE, VERY ENERGETIC, VERY SUCCESSFUL, HE HAD NEW AND COGENT EVIDENCE OF HIS POWER. NOT MERELY TO START BUT TO GO AHEAD ON HIS OWN ACCOUNT. THIS WAS THE GOOD SIDE. BUT HE DISCOVERED AND TRIED TO REBUKE IN HIMSELF A FEELING THAT HE HAD SO FAR WASTED THE TIME IN THAT HE HAD SEEN NOBODY AND NOTHING BEAUTIFUL. MEN OF AFFAIRS HAD NO CONCERN WITH A FEELING LIKE THAT. WOULD IVER HAVE IT. OR WOULD MR DISNEY? SURELY NOT! IT WOULD BE A POSITIVE INCONVENIENCE TO THEM, OR AT BEST A WORTHLESS ASSET. HE TRACED IT BACK TO BLENT, TO THAT INFLUENCE WHICH HE HAD ALMOST BROUGHT HIMSELF TO CALL MALIGN BECAUSE IT SEEMED IN SOME SUBTLE WAY ENERVATING. A THING THAT SOUGHT TO CLOG HIS STEPS AND HUNG ABOUT THOSE FEET WHICH HAD NEED TO BE SO ALERT AND

STEPS AND HUNG ABOUT THOSE FEET WHICH HAD NEED TO BE SO ALERT AND NIMBLE. YET THE OLD LIFE AT BLENT WOULD NOT HAVE SERVED BY ITSELF NOW.

WAS HE TO TURN OUT SO EXACTING THAT HE MUST HAVE BOTH LIVES BEFORE HE,

OR WHAT WAS IN HIM, COULD CRY "CONTENT"? A MAN WILL SOMETIMES BE alarmed when he realizes what he wants—a woman often.

SO HE CAME, IN OBEDIENCE TO LADY EVENSWOOD'S SUMMONS, VERY CONFIDENT BUT RATHER SOMBRE. WHEN HE ARRIVED, A WOMAN WAS THERE

WHOM HE DID NOT KNOW. SHE EXHALED FASHION AND THE AIR OF BEING
EXACTLY THE RIGHT THING. SHE WAS YOUNG—SEVERAL YEARS SHORT OF FORTY—
AND VERY HANDSOME. HER MANNER WAS QUIET AND WELL-DOWERED WITH

WAS NO EFFORT TO REMEMBER THAT MR DISNEY HAD MARRIED A DAUGHTER OF LORD BEWILLEY'S. THAT WAS ENOUGH; JUST AS HE KNEW ALL ABOUT HER, SHE WOULD KNOW ALL ABOUT HIM, THEY WERE BOTH OF THE PALE IN A SENSE THAT THEIR HOSTESS WAS, BUT LORD SOUTHEND—WELL, HARDLY WAS—AND (ABSURDLY BNOUGH) MR DISNEY HIMSELF NOT AT ALL. THIS AGAIN WAS IN PATENT INCONCRUITY WITH BLINKHAMPTON AND SMELT WORLLLY STRONG OF BLENT. LADY EVENSWOOD ENCOURAGED HARRY TO CONVEYSE WITH THE VISITOR.

"WE'RE A LITTLE QUETER," SHE WAS SAYING. "THE CRISIS IS DORMANT, AND THE BISHOP'S MADE, AND LORD HOVE HAS GONE TO CONSULT THE DUKE OF DEMANSTER—WHICH MEANS A FORTINGHT'S DELAY ANAHOW. AND PROBABLY

repressed humor. He was introduced to Lady Flora Disney, and found himself regarded with unmistakable interest and lurking amusement. It

BEING TOLD TO DO NOTHING IN THE BND. SO I SOMETIMES SEE ROBERT AT dinner."

"AND HE TELLS YOU THINGS, AND YOU'RE INDISCREET ABOUT THEM!" SAID LADY Evenswood rebukingly.

"I BELIEVE ROBERT CONSIDERS ME A SORT OF ANTE-ROOM TO PUBLICITY. AND IT'S SO MUCH EASIER TO DISOWN A WIFE THAN A JOURNALIST, ISN'T IT, MR Tristram?"

"Naturally. The Press have to pretend to believe one another," he said, smiling.

said, smiling. "That's the corner-stone," Southend agreed.

"GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS!" PURSUED LADY FLORA. "BUT DIANA was never a wife, if I remember."

"THOUGH HOW THEY DO IT, MY DEAR," MARVELLED LADY EVENSWOOD, "IS

what I don't understand."

"I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THEM," LADY FLORA DECLARED. "AND THEY KNOW NOTHING ABOUT ME. THEY STOP AT MY GOWNS, YOU KNOW, AND EVEN THEN

"I hope that stops at the gown too?" observed Southend.

"THE HAIR DOES IT, I THINK. SHE BUYS HERS AT THE SAME SHOP AS I—NOW
what do I do. Mr Tristram?"

"YES, OR—WELL, NO. I SUPPLEMENT THERE I DECLARE I WON'T WAIT ANY LONGER for Robert."
"HE WON'T COME NOW," SAID LADY EVENSWOOD. "IS THE BISHOP NICE, MY

"You, Lady Flora? You know the shop, is that enough?"

they always confuse me with Gertrude Melrose."

wish you'd come and see me, Mr Tristram."

Harry, making his little bow, declared that he would be delighted.

"I like to see young men sometimes," observed the lady, retreating.

"OH, YES, QUITE PLUMP AND GAITERY! GOOD-BY, DEAR COUSIN SYLVIA. I

"THE NEW STYLE," LADY EVENSWOOD SUMMED UP, AS THE DOOR CLOSED.
"And—well, I suppose Robert likes it."

"Dissimilia dissimilibus," shrugged Southend, fixing his glasses.

"It'S THE ONLY CONCESSION TO APPEARANCES HE EVER MADE." SIGHED LADY

"Oh, yes. That's what makes it so funny. If she weren't-----"

dear?"

Evenswood.

"She's a lady, though."

"Yes, it would all be natural enough."

"But we've been wasting your time, Mr Tristram."

"NEVER LESS WASTED SINCE I WAS BORN," PROTESTED HARRY, WHO HAD BOTH

"No, really I think not," she agreed, smiling. "Flora has her power."

The REWARK GRATED ON HIM: HE WANTED NOTHING OF FLORA AND HER POWER.

IT WAS INDEED RATHER AN UNFORTUNATE INTRODUCTION TO THE BUSINESS OF THE AFTERNOON: IT POINTED HARRY'S CUILLS A LITTLE, LADY EVENSWOOD, WITH A

"But she likes people who are independent best." She went on. "So

quick perception, tried to retrieve the observation.

moment for diplomacy approached.

enioved and learnt.

DOES ROBERT, IF IT COMES TO THAT. INDEED HE NEVER DOES A JOB FOR anyone."

"CARRIES THAT TOO FAR IN MY OPINION." COMMENTED SOUTHEND. THE

BUT WHEN IT CAME TO THE POINT, LADY EVENSWOOD SUAVELY TOOK THE TASK out of his hands. Her instinct told her that she could do it best; he soon CAME TO ACREE. SHE HAD THAT DELICACY WHICH HE DESIRED BUT LACKED;

SHE COULD CLAM SILENCE WHEN HE MUST HAVE SUFFERED INTERRUPTION; SHE COULD EXCUSE HER INTERFERENCE ON THE GROUND OF OLD FRIENDISHP. SHE

COULD PLEAD AN INTEREST WHICH MIGHT SEEM IMPERTINENT IN HIM. A BOVE
ALL, SHE COULD BE ELUSIVELY LUCID AND MAKE HERSELF UNDERSTOOD WITHOUT
any bluntness of statement.

"IF IT COULD BE SO MANAGED THAT THE WHOLE MISERABLE ACCIDENT SHOULD
BE BLOTTED OUT AND FORGOTTEN!" SHE EXCLAIMED. AS THOUGH SHE MIRLORED.

a personal favor.
"How can that BE?" ASKED HARRY. "I WAS IN, AND I AM OUT, LADY
Evenswood."

"YOU'RE OUT, AND YOUR COUSIN'S IN, YES." HARRY'S EYES NOTED THE WORDS AND DWELT ON HER FACE. "SHE CAN'T BE HARPY IN THAT STATE OF AFFAIRS either."

"Perhaps not." he admitted. "Facts are facts, though."

"THERE ARE WAYS—WAYS OF PREVENTING THAT." SOUTHEND INTERPOSED. murmuring vaguely. "I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'LL FEEL ABOUT IT. BUT WE ALL THINK YOU OLICHT TO

CONSIDER OTHER THINGS BESIDES YOUR PERSONAL PRETERRINGS. MIGHT LITELL Mr Disney—no, one moment, please! Our idea, I mean, was that THERE MIGHT BE A FAMILY ARRANGEMENT, A MOMENT, PLEASE, MR TRISTRAM! I don't mean, by which she would lose what she has----" "But that I should get it?"

"Well, yes. Oh, I know your feelings. But they would cease to exist if YOU CAME TO HER ON AN EQUALITY. WITH WHAT IS REALLY AND TRULY YOUR proper position recognized and—and——"

"I DON'T UNDERSTAND." HARRY DECLARED. "YOU MUST TELL ME WHAT YOU mean. Is it something that concerns Cecily as well as me?"

"Regularized." Southend supplied with a sharp glance at Harry.

"OH, ABOUT THAT WE HAVEN'T THE RIGHT EVEN TO ASK YOUR FEELINGS. THAT WOULD BE SIMPLY FOR YOU TO CONSIDER. BUT IF ANYTHING WERE TO happen---"

"NOTHING COULD." HARRY RESTRAINED HIMSELF NO LONGER. "THERE CAN BE NO auestion of it."

"I KNEW YOU'D FEEL LIKE THAT, JUST BECAUSE YOU FEEL LIKE THAT, I WANT TO MAKE THE OTHER SUGGESTION TO YOU. I'M NOT SPEAKING IDLY. I HAVE MY WARRANT, MR TRISTRAM, IF---" SHE WAS AT A LOSS FOR A MOMENT, "IF YOU EVER WENT BACK TO BLENT," SHE CONTINUED, NOT SATISFIED, BUT DRIVEN TO

SOME FORM OF WORDS. "IT ISN'T INEVITABLE THAT YOU SHOULD GO AS MR TRISTRAM. THERE ARE MEANS OF RIGHTING SUCH INJUSTICES AS YOURS. WAIT, PLEASE! IT WOULD BE FELT-AND FELT IN A QUARTER YOU CAN GUESS-THAT THE MASTER OF BLENT, WHICH YOU'D BE IN FACT ANYHOW, SHOULD HAVE THAT

unless you were still associated with Blent." "I don't understand at all." SHE EXCHANGED A DESPAIRING GLANCE WITH SOUTHEND: SHE COULD NOT TELL WHETHER OR NOT HE WAS SINCERE IN SAYING THAT HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND. SOUTHEND GREW WEARY OF THE DIPLOMACY WHICH HE HAD ADVOCATED: AFTER

POSITION RECOGNIZED. PERHAPS THERE WOULD NOT BE THE SAME FEELING.

ALL IT HAD TURNED OUT TO BE LADY EVENSWOOD'S, NOT HIS, WHICH MAY HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIS CHANGE OF MOOD TOWARD IT. HE TOOK UP the task with a brisk directness.

"It's like this. Harry. You reviewber that the unsuccessful glaimant in THE BEARSDALE CASE GOT A BARONY? THAT'S OUR PRECEDENT. BUT IT'S FELT NOT TO GO QUITE ALL THE WAY—BECAUSE THERE WAS A DOUBT THERE. (LUCKLY FOR MINA SHE WAS NOT BY TO HEAR.) BUT IT IS FELT THAT IN THE EVENT OF THE TWO BRANCHES OF YOUR FAMILY BRING LINTED IT WOULD BE PROPER TO-TO OBLITERATE PAST-ER-INCIDENTS. AND THAT COULD BE DONE BY RAISING YOU

TO THE PETRAGE, UNDER A NEW AND, AS WE HOPE, A SUPERIOR TITLE, WE BELIEVE MR DISNEY WOULD. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES I HAVE SUGGESTED. BE PREPARED TO RECOMMEND A VISCOUNTY, AND THAT THERE WOULD PROVE TO

BE NO DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY." THE LAST WORDS HAD, PRESUMABLY. REFERENCE TO THE SAME QUARTER THAT LADY EVENSWOOD HAD ONCE described by the words, "Somebody Else." THEY WATCHED HIM AS HE DIGESTED THE PROPOSAL, AT LAST MADE TO HIM IN A TOLERABLY PLAIN FORM. "YOU MUST GIVE ME A MOMENT TO FOLLOW THAT OUT," HE SAID. WITH A SMILE. BUT HE HAD IT ALL CLEAR ENOUGH BEFORE HE WOULD. made easy work of it, his feelings demanded a pause. He was greatly

ALLOW THEM TO PERCEIVE THAT HE UNDERSTOOD. FOR ALTHOUGH HIS BRAIN SURPRISED. HE HAD THOUGHT OF NO SUCH A THING, WHAT DIFFERENCES WOULD it make?

SOUTHEND WAS WELL SATISFIED WITH THE WAY IN WHICH HIS OVERTURE WAS received. Lady Evenswood was watching intently.

It was rather an awkward question put as bluntly as that. "Well, that did seem to be Mr Disney's view," said Southend. "HE WAS THINKING OF THE FAMILY—OF THE FAMILY AS A WHOLE, I'M SURE YOU

"THE IDEA IS ----" SAID HARRY SLOWLY--"I MEAN--I DON'T OUTE GATHER WHAT IT IS. YOU TALK OF MY COUSIN, AND THEN OF A VISCOUNTY, THE TWO GO

together, do they?"

THINK OF THAT TOO." URGED LADY EVENSWOOD. THERE WOULD NEVER BE A TRISTRAM WHO DID NOT, SHE WAS THINKING, WELL, EXCEPT ADDIE PER WHO REALLY THOUGHT OF NOTHING. "OF COURSE AS A THING PURBLY PERSONAL TO

YOU IT MIGHT BE JUST A LITTLE DIFFICULT." SHE MEANT, AND INTENDED HARRY TO UNDERSTAND. THAT WITHOUT THE MARRIAGE THE THING COULD NOT BE DONE AT ALL. MINA HAD REPORTED MR DISNEY FAITHFULLY, AND LADY EVENSWOOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF HER COUSIN ROBERT WAS NOT AT FAULT, "APART FROM ANYTHING.

ELSE. THERE WOULD BE THE SORDID QUESTION." SHE BNDED. WITH A SMILE THAT BECAME PROPITATORY AGAINST HER WILL: SHE HAD MEANT IT TO BE merely confidential.

THERE WAS GROUND FOR HOPE: HARRY HESTATED-TRUTH WILL OUT. EVEN WHERE IT IMPAIRS THE GRANDELIR OF MEN. THE SUGGESTION HAD ITS ATTRACTIONS: IT TOUGHED THE SPRING OF THE PICTURESQUE IN HIM WHICH BLINKHAMPTON HAD LEFT RUSTING IN IDLENESS. IT SUGGESTED SOMETHING IN regard to Cecily too-what it was, he did not reason out very clearly at

THE MOMENT. ANYHOW WHAT WAS PROPOSED WOULD CREATE A NEW SITUATION AND PUT HIM IN A DIFFERENT POSITION TOWARD HER. IN BRIEF. HE would have something more on his side. "Once HE WAS SURE THE PROPOSAL WAS AGREEABLE TO YOU

MURMURED LADY EVENSWOOD GENTLY. SHE WAS STILL VERY TENTATIVE ABOUT

the matter, and still watchful of Harry.

BUT SOUTHEND WAS NOT CAUTIOUS OR DID NOT READ HIS MAN SO WELL. TO HIM THE BATTLE SEEVED TO BE WON. HE WAS ASSURED IN HIS MANNER AND

"It's a great thing to have screwed Disney up to the viscounty. It does away with all difficulty about the name, you see."

HARRY LOOKED UP SHARRLY. HAD MR DISNEY BEEN "SCREWED UP?" WHO

HAD SCREWED HIM LIE?—BY WHAT WARRANT?—ON WHOSE COMMISSION?

decidedly triumphant as he said:

THAT WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM GLOWER AND TO BRING BACK SOMETHING OF THE CILD-TIME LOOK OF SUSHOON TO HIS FACE. BUT THE GREATER PART OF HIS ATTENTION WAS ENGROSSED BY THE SECOND HALF OF SOUTHEND'S ILL-ADVISED bit of jubilation.

"The name? The difficulty about the name?" he asked.

"IF IT HAD BEEN A BARONY—WELL, HERS WOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE, OF

COURSE. WITH THE HIGHER DEGREE YOURS WILL COME FIRST, AND HER BARONY be merged.—Viscount Blentmouth, eh, Harry?" He chuckled with glee.
"Viscount Blentmouth be Hanged!" CRED HARRY. HE MASTERED HIMSELF

"Viscount Blentinouth be hanged!" CRIED Harry. He mastered himself with an effort. "I beg your pardon, Lady Evenswood; and I'm much obliged to you, and to you too, Lord Southend, for—for screwing Mr.

DISNEY UP. It'S NOT A THING I COULD OR SHOULD HAVE DONE OR TRIED TO DO FOR MYSELF." IN SPITE OF HIS ATTEMPTED CALMNESS HIS VOICE GREW A LITTLE louder. "I want nothing but what's my own. If nothing's my own, well and good—I can wait till I make it something."

good—I can wait till I make it something."

"But, My DEAR HARRY——!" BEGAN THE DISCONFITED SOUTHEND. HARRY OUT him short, breaking again into impetuous speech

"But, MY DEAR HARRY ——!" BESAN THE DISCOMPTIED SOUTHEND. HARRY OUT him short, breaking again into impetuous speech.
"THERE'S NOTHING BETWEEN MY COUSIN AND ME. THERE'S NO QUESTION OF MARRAGE AND NEVER CAN BE. AND IF THERE WERE ——" HE SEEMED TO

GATHER HIMSELF UP FOR A FLIGHT OF SCORN—"IF THERE WERE, DO YOU THINK I'M GOING TO SAVE MY OWN PRIDE BY SADDLING THE FAMILY WITH A BEASTLY NEW viscounty?"

HIS TONES ROSE IN INDIGNATION ON THE LAST SENTENCE, AS HE LOOKED FROM

Southerd's hands were out before him in signal of bewildered distress. Lady Evenswood looked at Harry, then, with a cluck forward inclination of her body, past him; and she began to laugh.

one to the other. "Viscount Blentmouth indeed!" he growled.

"THANK YOU VERY MUCH, BUT I'VE BEEN TRISTRAM OF BLENT," ENDED HARRY, now in a very fine fume, and feeling he had been much insulted.

Scuthend's face came an uneasy smile, as he too looked toward the door. After a moment's furious staring at the two Harry faced round. The door had been softly and noiselessly opened to the extent of a courle of feet. A man stood in the doorway, tugging at a ragged

BEARD AND WITH EYES TWINKLING UNDER RUGGED BROWS. WHO WAS HE, AND HOW DID HE COME THERE? HARRY HEARD LADY EVENSWOOD'S LAUGHTER; HE HEARD HER MURWUR TO HERSELF WITH AN ACCENT OF RLEASURE, "A BEASTLY NEW VISCOLINITY!" THEN THE MAN IN THE DOORWAY CAME A LITTLE FARTHER IN.

STILL LOOKING PAST HIM. LADY EVENSWOOD SAT LAUGHING QUIETLY. EVEN ON

saying:
"That's exactly what I think about it, Mir Tristram. I've heard what you
said and I agree with you. There's an end, then, of the beastly new
viscounty!" He looked mookingly at Southend. "I've been screwed up
all for nothing, it seems," said he.
"Why. you're----?"

MY NAME IS DISNEY. I INTEND TO KEEP MINE, AND I KNOW BETTER THAN TO TRY to alter yours."

"I thought it would end like this!" cried Lady Evenswood.

"LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF, MR TRISTRAM, I CAME TO LOOK FOR MY WIFE, AND

"SHAN'T WE SAY THAT IT BEGINS LIKE THS?" ASKED MR DISNEY. HIS LOOK AT

"SHAN'T WE SAY THAT IT BEGINS LIKE THIS?" ASKED MR DISNEY. HIS Harry was a compliment.

arry was a compliment.



XXIII

A Decree of Banishment

THE IMP CRED—ABSOLUTELY CRED FOR VEXATION—WHEN A CURT AND SOUR NOTE FROM SOUTHEND TOLD HER THE ISSUE. THE BLOW STRUCK DOWN HER EXCITEMENT AND HER EXCULTATION. AWAY WENT ALL JOY IN HER ENCOUNTER WITH MR DISNEY, ALL PRIDE IN THE SKILL WITH WHICH SHE HAD RECOTTATED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. THE BIDING WAS PITHLIFFULDISCUSTING AND PITHLIF. SHE POURED OUT HER HEART'S BITTERNESS TO MAJOR DURLAY, WHO HAD COME TO VISIT HER.

"I'm tired of the whole thing, and I hate the Tristrams!" she declared.

"It always comes to that in time, Mina, when you mx yourself up in Deople's affairs."

"Wasn't it through you that I began to do it?"

THE MAJOR DECLINED TO ARGUE THE QUESTION—ONE OF SOME COMPLEXITY perhaps.

"Well, I've got plenty to do in London. Let's give up Merrion and take rooms here."

"Give up Merrion!" She was startled. But the reasons she assigned were prudential. "I've taken it till October, and I can't afford to. Besides, what's the use of being here in August?"

"You won't drop it yet, you see." The reasons did not deceive Duplay.

"I DON'T THINK I OUGHT TO DESERT CECLY. I SUPPOSE SHE'LL GO BACK TO BLENT.

"Doesn't look as if the match would come off now, does it?"

"It's just desperate. The last chance is gone. I don't know what to do."

"MARRY HIM YOURSELF," ADVISED THE MAJOR. THOUGH IT WAS AN OLD IDEA OF his, he was not very serious.

"I'D SOONER POISON HIM." SAID MINA DECISIVELY. "WHAT MUST MIR DISNEY

Oh, what an exasperating man he is!"

"Well, she must, Somebody must have it."

think of me?"
"I SHOULDN'T TROUBLE ABOUT THAT. DO YOU SUPPOSE HE THINKS MUCH AT ALL,
MINA?" (THAT IS THE SORT OF REMARK WHICH RELATIVES SOMETIMES REGARD
AS CONSOLATORY.) "I THINK HARRY TRISTRAM AS MUCH OF A FOOL AS YOU DO."

DUPLAY ADDED. "IF HE'D TAKEN IT. HE COULD HAVE MADE A GOOD MATCH

- anyhow, even if he didn't get Lady Tristram."

 "CEOLY'S JUST AS BAD. SHE'S RETIRED INTO HER SHELL. YOU DON'T KNOW THAT WAY OF HERS—OF THERS, I SUPPOSE IT IS, BOTHER THEM! SHE'S TREATING everybody and everything as if they didn't exist."

 "She'll go back to Blent, I suppose?"
- "IF IT'S GOING BEGGING, CALL ON ME," SAID THE MAJOR EQUABLY. HE WAS IN A BETTER HUMOR WITH THE WORLD THAN HE HAD BEEN FOR A LONG WHILE, HIS CONNECTION WITH IVER PROMISED WELL. BUT MINA SNIFFED SCORNFULLY; SHE WAS IN NO MOOD for idle jests.
- CECILY HAD BEEN TOLD ABOUT THE SCHEWE AND ITS LAMBNTABLE BND. HER ATTITUDE WAS ONE OF ENTIRE UNCONCERN. WHAT WAS IT TO HER IF HARRY WERE MADE A VISCOUNT, A DUKE, OR THE POPE? WHAT WAS ANYTHING TO HER? SHE WAS GOING BACK TO HER FATHER AT BLENT. THE ONLY ANIMATION SHE DISPLAYED WAS IN RESENTING THE REMINDER, AND INDEED DENYING THE FACT.

THAT SHE HAD EVER BEEN OTHER THAN ABSOLUTELY HAPPY AND CONTENTED AT

KNEW. NOW PERHAPS MINA COULD SYMPATHIZE WITH HER, AND COULD understand the sort of way in which Cousin Harry received attempts to help him. On this point they drew together again.

"You must come back to Merrion, dear," urged Cecily.

MINA, WHO NEVER MEANT TO DO ANYTHING ELSE, EMBRACED HER FRIEND AND AFFECTIONATELY CONSENTED. IT IS ALWAYS PLEASANT TO DO ON ENTREATY WHAT WE might be driven to do unasked.

GCOOD-BY HAD TO BE SAID TO LADY EVENSWOOD. THAT LADY WAS VERY CHERFUL ABOUT HARRY; SHE WAS, HARDLY WITH ANY DISGUISE, AN ADMIRER OF HIS CONDUCT, AND SAID THAT UNDOUBTELLY HE HAD MADE A VERY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION ON ROBERT. SHE SEBIMED TO MAKE LITTLE OF THE DESPERATE

BLENT. MINA PRESSED THE POINT, AND CECLY THEN DECLARED THAT NOW AT ANY RATE HER CONSCIENCE WAS AT REST. SHE HAD TRIED TO DO WHAT WAS RIGHT—AT WHAT SACRIFICE MINA KNEW: THE RECEPTION OF HER OFFER MINA

CAREER, AND THAT SEEMED TO HER VERY FROMSING. "WHATEVER HE TRIES I
THINK HE'LL SUCCEED IN," SHE SAID. THAT WAS NOT BNOUGH FOR MINA; HE
MUST TRY MINA'S THINGS—THOSE SHE HAD SET HER HEART ON—BEFORE SHE
COULD BE CONTENT. "BUT YOU NEVER BROUGHT CECLLY TO SEE ME," LADY
EVENSWOOD complained. "And I'm just going away now."

THAT WAS IT, MINA DECIDED. LADY EVENSWOOD HAD NOT SEEN CECLLY.
SHE HAD APPROACHED THE TRISTRAM BUZZLE FROM ONE SIDE ONLY. AND HAD

CONDITION OF AFFAIRS AS REGARDED CECILY. SHE WAS THINKING OF HARRY'S

SHE HAD APPROACHED THE TRISTRAM PUZZLE FROM ONE SIDE ONLY, AND HAD PERCEIVED BUT ONE ASPECT OF IT. SHE DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT IT WAS COMPLEX AND DOUBLE-HEADED; IT WAS NETHER HARRY NOR CECILY, BUT HARRY AND CECILY. MINA HAD BEEN IN THAT STATE OF MIND BEFORE CECILY.

HARRY AND CEOLLY. MINA HAD BEEN IN THAT STATE OF MIND BEFORE CEOLLY CAME ON THE SCENE, IT WAS NATURAL NOW IN LADY EVENSWOOD. BUT IT RENDERED HER REALLY USELESS. IT WAS A SHOCK TO FIND THAT, ALL ALONG, IN

NOVEMBER PER NEALLY COGLESS. II VIVAS A SPLOK TO FIND THAT, ALL ALONG, II LADY EVENSMOOD'S MIND CEOLY HAD BEEN A STEP TOWARD THE PEEPAGE RATHER THAN THE PREPAGE THE PRIST STEP TOWARD CEOLY. MINA WONDERED

raiher ihan ihe heerage ihe hiksi siep toward cecily. Mina wondered Loftily (But silently) how woman could take so slighting a view of woman terrible gossip."

"What does Lady Flora Disney want with him?"

"WELL, MY DEAR, ARE YOU GOING TO TURN ROUND AND SAY YOU DON'T understand why he interests women?"

"I DON'T SEE WHY HE SHOULD INTEREST LADY FLORA." MINA HAD ALREADY MADE UP HER MIND THAT SHE HATED THAT SORT OF WOMAN. IT WAS BAD

"AND FLORA DISNEY HAS QUITE TAKEN HIM UP," LADY EVENSWOOD PURSUED. "GEORGE TELLS ME HE'S BEEN TO LUNCH THERE TWICE. GEORGE IS A

"And of course he's flattered. Any young man would be."

ENOUGH TO HAVE CAPTURED MR DISNEY: MUST THE INSATIATE CREATURE DRAW

"I don't think he's improved since he left Blent."

into her net Harry Tristram also?

"Country folks always say that about their young men when they come to town," smled Lady Evenswood. "He's learning his world, my dear. And he seems very sensible. He hasn't inherited poor Addie's wildness."

"Yes, he has. But it only comes out now and then. When it does——"
"IT WON'T COME OUT WITH FLORA," LADY EVENSWOOD INTERRUPTED
REASSURINGLY. "AND AT ANY RATE, AS YOU MAY SUPPOSE, I'M COING TO
LEAVE HIM TO HIS OWN DEVICES. OH, I THINK HE'S QUITE RIGHT, BUT I DON'T
want to be wrong myself again. that's all."

BUT ANOTHER THING WAS TO HAPPEN BEFORE MINA WENT BACK TO THE VALLEY OF THE BLENT; A FEARPUL, DELIGHTFUL THING. AN ASTONISHING MISSIVE CAME— A CARD INVITING HER TO DINE WITH MR AND LADY FLORA DISNEY, SHE

A CARD INVITING HER TO DINE WITH MR AND LADY FLORA DISNEY. SHE
GASPED AS SHE READ IT. HAD LADY FLORA EVER INDULGED IN THE SAME
EXPRESSION OF FEELING, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WHEN SHE WAS ASKED TO
SEND IT. GASPING STILL, MINA TELEGRAPHED FOR HER BEST FROOK AND ALL THE

JEWELLED TOKENS OF AFFECTION WHICH SURVIVED TO TESTIFY TO ADOLF ZABRISKA'S LOVE. IT WAS IN ITSELF AN INFINITELY GREAT OC CASION, DESTINED ALWAYS TO LOOM LARGE IN MENORY; BUT IT PROVED TO HAVE A BEARING ON the Tristram problem too.

FOR HARRY WAS THERE. HE SAT ON THE HOSTESS'S LEFT, ON HER OTHER SIDE WAS HANDSOME LORD HOVE, VERY RESPLENDENT IN FULL DRESS, STARRED AND RIBANDED. SEVERAL OF THE MEN WERE LIKE THAT, THERE WAS SOME FUNCTION LATER ON, MINA LEARNT FROM AN EASY-MANNERED YOUTH WHO SAT BY HER AND SEEMED BORED WITH THE PARTY. DISNEY CAME IN LATE, IN HIS USUAL INDIFFERENTLY FITTING MORNING CLOTHES, SNATCHING AN HOUR FROM THE HOUSE, IN THE STRONGEST CONTRAST TO THE FAIR SUMPTUDUSNESS OF HIS WIFE. HE TOOK A VACANT CHAIR TWO PLACES FROM MINA AND NODDED AT HER IN A FRIENDLY WAY. THEY WERE AT A ROUND TABLE, AND THERE WERE ONLY A DOZEN THERE. THE EASY-MANNERED YOUTH TOLD HER ALL ABOUT THEM, INCLUDING SEVERAL THINGS WHICH IT IS TO BE HORED WERE NOT TRUE, HE SEEMED TO VIEW THEM FROM AN ALTITUDE OF GOOD-HUNGRED CONTEMPT. MINA DISCOVERED AFTERWARD THAT HE WAS A COUSIN OF LADY FLORA'S. AND

OCCUPIED A FOSITION IN MESSRS COUTTS'S BANK. HE CHUCKLED ONCE, remarking:

"FLORA'S TALKIN' TO TRISTRAM ALL THE TIME, INSTEAD OF BEIN FLEASANT TO TOMMY HOVE. FACT IS, SHE HATES TOMMY, AND SHE'D BE GLAD IF THE CHIEF WOULD GIVE HIM THE BOOT. BUT THE CHIEF DOESN'T WANT TO, BECAUSE TOMMY'S Well in at Court and the Chief isn't."

"Why does Lady Flora hate Lord Hove? He's very handsome."

"THINK SO? WELL, I SEE SO MANY FELLOWS LIKE THAT, THAT I'M BEGINNN' TO HATE 'BM. LIKE THE 'SWEET GIRL,' DON'T YOU KNOW? I HEAR THE CHIEF THINKS Tristram'll train on."

"DO WHAT?" ASKED MINA ABSENTLY, LOOKING ACROSS AT HARRY. HARRY WAS quite lively, and deep in conversation with his hostess.

"WELL. THEY MIGHT PUT HIM IN THE HOUSE, AND SO ON. YOU KNOW, SEE THAT WOMAN NEXT BUT THREE? THAT'S GERTRUDE MELROSE. SPENDS MORE ON CLOTHES THAN ANY WOWAN IN LONDON, AND SHE'S ONLY GOT NINE HUNDRED A vear. Queer?" He smiled as he consumed an almond. "SHE MUST GET INTO DEBT." SAID MINA. GAZING AT THE CLOTHES OF inexplicable origin. "Gettin" In Isn't the Mystery," Remarked the Youth. "It's the cettin" out. Madame—er—Zabriska." He had taken a swift glance at Mina's card. MINA LOOKED ROUND. "IS IT IN THIS ROOM THEY HAVE THE COUNCILS?" SHE asked "CABINETS? DON'T KNOW. DOWNSTAIRS SOMEWHERE, I BELIEVE. ANYHOW." HE SMOTHERED A YAWN, "QUEER THING, THAT ABOUT TRISTRAM, YOU KNOW, IF EVERYTHING WAS KNOWN, YOU KNOW, I SHOULDN'T WONDER IF A LOT OF OTHER fellows found themselves——" HE WAS INTERRUPTED. FORTUNATELY PERHAPS. IN THESE SPECULATIONS BY A CLESTION FROM HIS OTHER NEIGHBOR MINA WAS LETT ALONE FOR SOME MINUTES. AND SET TO WORK TO OBSERVE THE SCENE. SHE WAS TOLERABLY AT EASE NOW: A MAN WAS ON EACH SIDE OF HER. AND IN THE END IT WAS THE WOMEN OF WHOM SHE WAS AFRAID. THERE WOULD BE A TERRIBLE TIME IN THE DRAWING-ROOM, BUT SHE DETERMINED NOT TO THINK OF THAT, HARRY SAW HER SITTING SILENT AND SMLED ACROSS AT HER WHILE HE LISTENED TO LADY FLORA. THE SMILE SEEMED TO COME FROM A GREAT WAY OFF. THE LONGER SHE SAT THERE THE MORE THAT IMPRESSION GREW: HE SEEMED SO MUCH AND SO NATURALLY A PART OF THE SCENE AND ONE OF THE COMPANY. SHE WAS SO EMPHATICALLY NOT ONE OF THEM. SAVE BY THE MEREST ACCIDENT AND FOR AN EVENING'S SPAN. THE SENSE OF DIFFERENCE AND DISTANCE TROUBLED HER. SHE THOUGHT OF CEOLY ALONE AT HOME, AND GREW MORE TROUBLED STILL. SHE FELT ABSURD TOO, BECAUSE SHE HAD BEEN TRYING TO HELP HARRY. IF THAT HAD TO BE DONE. SHE SUPPOSED LADY FLORA WOULD DO IT NOW.

WAS BITTER. WHERE DIFFERENCE OF CLASS COMES IN, WOMEN SEEM MORE

TRIED TO INTERVENE ONCE OR TWICE, WITH NO SUCCESS; CAPRICIOUS WAVES OF SYMPATHY UNDULATED ACROSS TO HIM FROM MINA. SHE TURNED HER HEAD BY CHANCE, AND FOUND MR DISNEY SILENT TOO, AND LOCKING AT HER. THE NEXT moment he spoke to the easy-mannered youth.

"Well, Theo, what's the world saving and doing?"

moment he spoke to the easy-mannered youth.
"Well, Theo, what's the world saying and doing?"
"SAME AS LAST YEAR, COUSIN ROBERT," ANSWERED THEO CHERFULLY.
"Government's a year older, of course."

HOSTILE TO ONE ANOTHER THAN MEN ARE TO MEN: PERHAPS THIS SHOULD BE

THROUGH THE TALK OF THE REST SHE LISTENED TO HARRY AND LADY FLORA. THAT HARRY SHOULD HOLD HIS OWN DID NOT SURPRISE HER; IT WAS RATHER UNEXPECTED THAT HE SHOULD DO IT SO LIGHTLY AND SO LIRBANFLY I ORD HOVE

considered in relation to the franchise question.

—and liked him even better.

"The drawing-rooms have kicked us out already, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, rather. But the Bank's not sure."

IN AN INSTANT MINA WAS PLEASED; SHE DETECTED AN UNEXPECTED BUT PLEASANT FRENDSHIP BETWEEN MR DISNEY AND THE YOUTH. SHE OREDITED DISNEY WITH MORE HUMANTY—THE HUMOR NECESSARY SHE KNEW HE HAD

"Good! That's something. Banks against drawing-rooms for me, Madame Zabriska." He brought her into the conversation almost with tact; he must have had a strong wish to make her comfortable.
"That's right." announced Theo. "I should say you're all right in the

COUNTRY TOO. CROPS PRETTY GOOD, YOU KNOW, AND THE RAIN'S COMIN DOWN

just nicely." "Well, I ordered it," said Mr Disney.

veli, i ordered it," said Mr Disney.

"TAKN ALL THE CREDIT YOU CAN GET," OBSERVED THEO. "LIKE THE MAN WHO carved his name on the knife before he stabbed his mother-in-law."

amazed her.

HARRY LOOKED ACROSS WITH A SURPRISED AIR, HE SEEVED TO WONDER THAT
SHE SHOULD BE BNJOYING HERSELF. MINA WAS ANNOYED, AND SET HERSELF TO
BE MERRY: A GLANCE FROM LADY FLORA CONVERTED VEXATION INTO RAGE. SHE

"What did he do that for?" ORIED MINA. A GUFFAW FROM DISNEY QUITE

TURNED BACK TO THEO; SOMEHOW MR DISNEY HAD TAUGHT HER HOW TO LIKE HIM—OFTEN A VALUABLE LESSON, IF PEOPLE WOULD KEEP THER EYES OPEN for it.

"EVERYBODY ELSE I'VE MET HAS BEEN HORRIBLY AFRAID OF MR DISNEY," SHE said in a half-whisper.

"Oh, you aren't in a funk of a man who's smacked your head!"

That seemed a better paradox than most. Mina nodded approvingly.

"WHAT DOES THE BANK SAY ABOUT BARLLIAND, THEO?" CALLED DISNEY.

Lord Hove paused in the act of drinking a glass of wine.

"Well, they're just wonderin' who's goin' to do the kickin'," said Theo.

"AND WHO'S GOING TO TAKE IT?" DISNEY SEEMED MUCH AMUSED. LORD

HOVE HAD TURNED A LITTLE PINK. MINA HAD A VAGUE SENSE THAT SERIOUS

THINGS WERE BEING JOKED ABOUT. HARRY HAD TURNED FROM HIS HOSTESS AND

was listening.

"That's what it comes to " concluded Theo.

was listening.

"That's what it comes to," concluded Theo.

Disney Glanced Round, Smling GRIMLY. EVERYBODY HAD BECOME SILENT.

BARILLAND HAD PRODUCED THE QUESTION ON WHICH LORD HOVE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE RESTIVE. DISNEY LAUGHED AND LOOKED AT HIS WIFE. SHE ROSE FROM THE TABLE. MR DISNEY HAD ETHER LEARNT WHAT HE WANTED OR HAD FINSHED AMUSING HIMSELF. MINA DID NOT KNOW WHICH, NO MORE, Oddly enough. did Lord Hove.

Mr Disney was by the door, saying good-by to the ladies; he would

"WE'VE DONE ALL WE COULD. MADAME ZABRISKA." HE SAID. "WE MUST leave him alone, eh?" "I'm afraid so. You've been very kind. Mr Disney." "BETTER AS IT IS. I FANCY, NOW THEN, FLORA!" AT THIS PERFUPTORY SUMMONS. LADY FLORA LEFT THEO. BY WHOM SHE HAD HALTED, AND FOLLOWED MINA through the door. THE DREADFUL MOMENT HAD COME. IT JUSTIFIED MINA'S FEARS, BUT NOT IN THE WAY SHE HAD EXPECTED. TWO OF THE WOMEN LEFT DIRECTLY: THE OTHER TWO WENT OFF INTO A CORNER: HER HOSTESS SAT DOWN AND TALKED TO HER. LADY FLORA WAS NOT DISTANT AND DID NOT MAKE MINA FEEL AN OUTSIDER. THE FAULT WAS THE OTHER WAY: SHE WAS CONFIDENTIAL—AND ABOUT HARRY. SHE ASSUMED AN INTIMACY WITH HIM EQUAL OR MORE THAN EQUAL TO MINA'S OWN: SHE EVEN TOLD MINA THINGS ABOUT HIM: SHE SAID "WE" THOUGHT HIM an enormous acquisition, and hoped to see a great deal of him. It was ALL VERY KIND. AND MINA. AS A TRUE FRIEND. SHOULD HAVE BEEN DELIGHTED. As it was, dolor grew upon her.

NOT BE COMING TO THE DRAWING-ROOM. HE STOPPED MINA. WHO WENT OUT

last, just before his wife.

"And I suppose the cousin is quite ——?" A gentle motion of Lady Flora's Fan was left to define Ceolly more exactly, and proved fully up to the task.

"She's the most fascinating creature I ever saw," cried Mina.

"Resoled out of Chelsea, wasn't she?" swiled Lady Flora. "Poor thing! One's sorry for her. When her mouraing's over we must get her

out. I do hope she's something like Mr Tristram?"
"I THINK SHE'S EVER SO MUCH NICER THAN MR TRISTRAM." MINA WOULD HAVE
shrunk from stating this upon oath.

"HE INTERESTS ME ENORMOUSLY, AND IT'S SO SELDOM I LIKE ROBERT'S YOUNG

SO HE WAS TO BE ROBERT'S YOUNG MAN TOO! THE THING GREW WORSE AND WORSE ALMOST SHE HATED HER IDOL MR DISNEY, PERSONAL JEALOUSY, AND JEALOUSY FOR CECLY, BLINDED HER TO HIS MERITS, MUCH MORE TO THE gracious cordiality which his wife was now showing. "Yes, I'm sure we shall make something of Harry Tristram." "HE DOESN'T LIKE THINGS DONE FOR HIM." MINA DECLARED. SHE MEANT TO show how very well she knew him, and spoke with an air of authority. "Oh, of course it won't look like that, Madame Zabriska." Now the IMP'S EFFORTS HAD LOOKED LIKE THAT-JUST LIKE IT. SHE CHAFED UNDER CONSCIOUS INFERIORITY: LADY FLORA HAD SMILED AT BEING THOUGHT TO need such a reminder. "Men never see it unless it's absolutely crammed down their throats." LADY FLORA PURSUED, "THEY ALWAYS THINK IT'S ALL THEMSELVES, YOU KNOW, It would be very clumsy to be found out." IN PERFECT INNOCENCE SHE SPRINKLED PEPPER ON MINA'S WOUND. ABLE TO endure no more, the Imp declared that she must go back to Cecily. "Oh, poor girl. I cutte forgot her! You're going back to Blent with her. I

men "

TO THE ODDEST PEOPLE, LADY FLORA PRIDED HERSELF ON A BECOMING BEARING. AND IN THE END THIS LITTLE MADAME ZABRISKA HAD RATHER AMUSED HER; SHE WAS FUNNY WITH HER AIRS OF OWNERSHIP ABOUT HARRY Tristram.

WELL POOR MINA UNDERSTOOD! ALL THAT THE BNEWY THOUGHT WAS LEGIBLE TO HER; ALL THE INSERY THAT KEEN PERCEPTIONS CAN SOMETIMES BRING WAS

SUPPOSE? DO COME AND SEE US WHEN YOU'RE IN TOWN AGAIN." WAS THERE OR WAS THERE NOT THE SLICHTEST SICH AS SHE TURNED AWAY, A SICH THAT SPOKE OF DUTY NOBLY DONE? EVEN TOWARD ROBERT'S CAPRICES. EVEN and she got into her cab a miserable woman. THEO WAS ON THE DOORSTEP. "ESCAPIN"," HE CONFIDED TO HER WHILE HE HANDED HER IN "WORST OF THESE PARTIES GENERALLY IS THAT THERE'S NOBODY AMUSIN." HE OBSERVED AS HE DID HER THIS SERVICE. "AREN'T YOU RATHER

SURE TO BE HERS. SHE HAD SPENT THE MOST NOTABLE EVENING OF HER LIFE.

No, at the moment at least Mina did not rejoice on that account.

glad you haven't got to take on Flora's job. Madame Zabriska?"

WHEN SHE REACHED HOME. THERE WAS NOTHING TO CHANGE HER MOOD.

SHE FOUND CECILY IN A MELANCHOLY SO SYMPATHETIC AS TO INVITE AN IMMEDIATE OUTPOURING OF THE HEART, CECILY WAS BEAUTIFUL THAT EVENING.

IN HER BLACK FROOK, WITH HER FAIR HAIR, HER PALE FACE, AND HER EYES FULL OF TRAGEDY. SHE HAD BEEN WRITING, IT APPEARED: INK AND PAPER WERE ON THE TABLE. SHE WAS VERY QUIET, BUT, MINA THOUGHT, WITH THE STILLNESS THAT

FOLLOWS A STORM. UNASKED, THE IMP SKETCHED THE DINNER PARTY.

ESPECIALLY HARRY'S SHARE IN IT. HER DESPAIR WAS LACED WITH VITRIOL AND she avoided a kind word about anybody. This was blank ingratitude to MR DISNEY, AND TO THEO TOO: BUT OUR FRIENDS CAN SELDOM ESCAPE FROM paving for our misfortunes.

"Those people have got hold of him. We've lost him. That's the BND of it." she cried.

CECILY HAD NOTHING TO SAY: SHE LEANT BACK IN A LIMP FORLORINESS WHILE MINA EXPATIATED ON THIS DOLEFUL TEXT. THERE CAME A LUXURY INTO THE IMP'S

WOE AS SHE REALIZED FOR HERSELF AND HER AUDITOR THE EXTREME SORROWS OF THE SITUATION: SHE FORGOT ENTIRELY THAT THERE WAS NOT AND NEVER HAD BEEN ANY REASON WHY HARRY SHOULD BE ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR TO HER AT LEAST, SHE OBSERVED THAT OF COURSE SHE WAS GLAD FOR HIS SAKE, THIS

TIME-HONORED UNSELFISHNESS WON NO ASSENT FROM CECLY. LACKING THE REINFORCEMENT OF DISCUSSION. THE STREAM OF MINA'S LAMENTATION BEGAN to run drv.

"I'm going back to Blent to-morrow," said Cecily suddenly.

"Oh. it's no use talking." she ended. "There it is!"

IT WAS NO MORE THAN MINA HAD EXPECTED. "YES, WE MAY AS WELL," SHE assented dismally.

CECILY ROSE AND BEGAN TO WALK ABOUT. HER AIR CAUGHT MINA'S ATTENTION.

AGAIN; ON THS, THE EVENING BEFORE SHE RETURNED TO BLENT, IT HAD SOMETHING OF THAT SUPPRESSED PASSION WHICH HAD MARKED HER MANNER ON THE NIGHT WHEN SHE DETERMINED TO LEAVE IT. SHE CAME TO A STAND opposite Mina.

"I'VE MADE UP MY MIND. FROM THIS MOMENT. MINA. BLENT IS MINE. UP TO

NOW I'VE HELD IT FOR HARRY. NOW II'S MINE. I SHALL GO BACK AND BEGIN everything there to-morrow."

Mina felt the tragedy; the inevitable was being accepted.

"You see I've been writing?" "Yes. Ceolly." After ALL IT LOOKED AS THOUGH THE IMP WERE NOT TO BE

cheated of her sensation.

"I've written to Cousin Harry I've to die him what I mean to bo He must."

"I'VE WRITTEN TO COUSIN HARRY. I'VE TOLD HIM WHAT I MEAN TO DO. HE MUST THINK IT RIGHT, IT'S THE ONLY THING HE'S LEFT ME TO DO. BUT I'VE TOLD HIM I CAN do it only on one condition. He'll have my letter to-morrow."

"On one condition? What?"

"I SAID TO HIM THAT HE GAVE ME BLENT BECAUSE I WAS THERE, BECAUSE HE
SAW ME THERE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL. THAT'S TRUE. IF I'D STAYED HERE,
WOULD HE EVER HAVE TOLD HIS SECRET? NEVER! HE WOULDN'T SO MUCH AS

WOULD HE EVER HAVE TOLD HIS SECRET? NEVER! HE WOULDN'T SO MUCH AS HAVE COME TO SEE ME, HE'D NEVER HAVE THOUGHT OF ME, HE'D HAVE forgotten all about me. It was seeing me there."

"Well, seeing you, anyhow."

"Seeng me there—there at Blent," she insisted, now almost angrily.
"So he'll understand what I mean by the thing I've asked of him. And
he must obey." Her — voice became inferious. "I've told him that I'm
going back, going to stay there, and live there, but that he must never,
never come there."

Mina started, her eyes wide-open in surprise at this heroic measure.

"I MUST NEVER SEE HIM—IF I CAN HELP IT. ANYHOW I MUST NEVER SEE HIMAT

Blent. That's the only way I can endure it."

"Never see HM. Never have HM at Blent!" Mina was trying to sort out the state of things which would result. It was pretty Plain what had happened; Cecily had felt the need of doing something; here it was.

Mina's sympathes, quick to move, darted out to Harry. "Think what it'll mean to him never to see Blent!" she cried.

"To HM? Nothing, nothing! Why, you yourself came home just now saying that we were nothing to HM! Blend's nothing to HM now. It's for

my own sake that I've said he mustn't come."
"You've begged him not to come?"
"I've TOLD HM NOT TO COME," SAID CEOLLY HAUGHTILY. "IF II'S HS, LET HM
TAKE IT. IF IT'S MNE, I CAN CHOOSE WHO SHALL COME THERE. DON'T YOU SEE,

TAKE IT. IF IT'S MINE, I CAN CHOOSE WHO SHALL COME THERE DON'T YOU SEE, DON'T YOU SEE? HOW CAN I EVER CHEAT MYSELF INTO THINKING IT'S MINE BY RIGHT, IF I SEE HARRY THERE?" SHE PAUSED A MOMENT. "AND IF YOU'D THROWN YOURSELF AT A MAN'S HEAD, AND HE'D REFUSED YOU, WOULD YOU want to have him about?"

"N—NO," SAD MINA, BUT RATHER HESTATINGLY; UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATIONS ARE TO SOME NATURES BETTER THAN NO SITUATIONS AT ALL. "NO, OF COURSE NOT," SHE ADDED MORE CONFIDENTLY, AFTER SHE HAD SPENT A MOMENT IN bracing up her sense of what was seemly.

"So I've ended it, I've ended everything. I posted my letter just before

TO BLENT." SHE THREW HERSELF INTO AN ARM-CHAR, LEANING BACK IN A SUDDEN WEARINESS AFTER THE EXCITED ENOTION WITH WHICH SHE HAD declared her resolve. Mina sat on the other side of the table looking at her, and after a moment's looking suddenly began to sob.

"It'S TOO MSERABLE," SHE DECLARED IN WRATHFUL WOE. "WHY COULDN'T HE HAVE SAID NOTHING ABOUT IT AND JUST MARRIED YOU? OH, I HATE IT ALL, BECAUSE I LOVE YOU BOTH. I KNOW PEOPLE THINK I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM, BUT I'M NOT. It'S BOTH OF YOU, IT'S THE WHOLE THING; AND NOW IT NEVER, NEVER CAN GO STRAIGHT. IF HE GOT BLENT BACK NOW BY A MRACLE, IT WOULD BE JUST AS bad."

"WORSE," Said Cecily, "if you mean that then he might——"

"YES, WORSE," MOANED MINA. "It'S HOPELESS EVERY WAY. AND I BELIEVE he's fond of you."

YOU CAME IN, AND HE'LL GET IT TO-MORROW, AND NOW, MINA, I'M GOING BACK

he's fond of you."

A scornful smile was Cecily's only but sufficient answer.

"AND YOU LOVE HIM" MINA'S SORROW MADE HER FORGET ALL FEAR. SHE SAID
IN THIS MOMENT WHAT SHE HAD NEVER BEFORE DARED TO SAY. "OH, OF
COURSE YOU DO, OR YOU'D NEVER HAVE TOLD HIM HE MUSTIN'T COME TO BLENT.
BUT HE WON'T UNDERSTAND THAT—AND IT WOULD MAKE NO DIFFERENCE IF HE

REVOLT AND BEWILDERWENT WAS WRUNG FROM HER BY THE WAYS OF THE FAMILY
WITH WHOSE FATE SHE HAD BECOME SO CONCERNED. SOUTHERD HAD FELT
MUCH THE SAME THING OVER THE MATTER OF HARRY AND THE VISCOUNTY. "SO IT
all code, it all codes, and wo've get to go back to Plont!"

DID. I SUPPOSE! OH, YOU TRISTRAMS!" AGAIN HER OLD DESPAIRING CRY OF

all ends, it all ends—and we've got to go back to Blent!"
"Yes, I Love Him," Said Cealy. "That evening in the Long Gallery—the

"YES, I LOVE HIM," SAD CEOLY. "THAT EVENING IN THE LONG GALLERY—THE EVENING WHEN HE GAVE ME BLENT—DO YOU KNOW WHAT I THOUGHT?" SHE

EVBNING WHEN HE GAVE ME BLENT—DO YOU KNOW WHAT I THOUGHT?" SHE SPOKE LOW AND QUICKLY, LYING BACK QUITE STILL IN THE ATTITUDE THAT ADDIE TRISTRAM HAD ONCE MADE HER OWN. "I WATCHED HIM, AND I SAW THAT HE

HAD SOMETHING TO SAY, AND YET WOULDN'T SAY IT. I SAW HE WAS STRUGGLING.

THERE WAS SOMETHING FLSE. I SAW IT. I HAD COME TO LOVE HIM THEN ALREADY—OH, I THINK AS SOON AS I SAW HIM AT BLENT. AND I WAITED FOR IT. Did vou ever do that, Mina—do vou remember?" MINA WAS SILENT: HER MEMORIES GAVE HER NO SUCH THING AS THAT. HER SORS HAD CEASED: SHE SAT LISTENING IN TENSE EXCITEMENT TO THE HISTORY of the scene that she had descried, dim and far off, from the terrace of Merrion on the hill. THOUGHT HE FELT BOUND IN HONOR AND I HOPED—YES. I HOPED—HE WOULD BREAK HIS WORD AND THROW AWAY HIS HONOR. I SAW IT COMING. AND MY HEART SEEMED TO BURST AS I WAITED FOR IT. YOU'D KNOW. IF IT HAD EVER HAPPENED TO YOU LIKE THAT. AND AT LAST I SAW HE WOULD SPEAK-I SAW HE MUST SPEAK. HE CAME AND STOOD BY ME. SUDDENLY HE CRIED. 'I CAN'T DO IT.' THEN MY HEART LEAPT, BECAUSE I THOUGHT HE MEANT HE COULDN'T MARRY JANIE MER. I LOOKED UP AT HIM AND I SUPPOSE I SAID SOMETHING. HE CAUGHT ME BY THE ARM, I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO KISS ME, MINA, AND THEN—THEN HE TOLD ME THAT BLENT WAS MINE—NOT HIMSELF BUT BLENT— THAT I WAS LADY TRISTRAM, AND HE-HARRY NOTHING-HE SAID. HARRY

And I watched, how I watched! He was engaged to Janie Iver—he HAD TOLD ME THAT. BUT HE DIDN'T LOVE HER-YES, HE TOLD ME THAT TOO, BUT

"Oh, if you'd tell him that!" cried Mina. "Tell HM!" She smled in superb scorn. "I'd die before I'd tell Hm. I COULD GO AND OFFER MYSELF TO HIM JUST BECAUSE HE DIDN'T KNOW. AND HE'LL

Nothing-at-all."

NEVER KNOW NOW. ONLY NOW YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT BLENT IS-AH. THAT

IT'S ALL BITTERNESS TO ME! AND YOU KNOW NOW WHY HE MUST NEVER COME. Yes, as you say, it all ends now,"

MINA CAME AND KNELT DOWN BY HER. CARESSING HER HAND. CECLY shivered a little and moved with a vague air of discomfort.

"But I believe he cares for you," Mina whispered.
"He might have cared for me perhaps. But Blent's between."

BLENT WAS BETWEEN. THE DIFFICULTY SEEMED INSUPERABLE—AT LEAST WHERE YOU WERE DEALING WITH TRISTRAMS. MINA COULD NOT BUT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT. FOR HARRY, HAVING NOTHING TO GIVE, WOULD TAKE NOTHING. AND CECLLY, HAVING MUCH, WAS THEREBY DEBARRED FROM GIVING ANYTHING. AND IF THAT MIRACLE OF WHICH MINA HAD SPOKEN CAME ABOUT, THE FRATIS WOULD BE EXCHANGED BUT THE POSITION WOULD BE NO MORE HOPEFUL. THE TRISTRAMS NOT ONLY BROUGHT ABOUT DIFFICULT STUATIONS—AS ADDIE HAD DONE HERE—BUT BY BRING WHAT THEY WHERE THEY INSU BRD THAT

THE DIFFICULTIES SHOULD NOT BE OVERCOME. YET AT THIS MOMENT MINA COULD NOT CRY, "OH, YOU TRISTRAMS!" ANY MORE. HER SORROW WAS TOO GREAT AND Cecily too beautiful. She seemed again to see Addie, and neither she NOR ANYBODY. BLSE. COULD. HAVE BEEN HARD TO ADDIE. SHE COVERED.

"YES, THS IS THE END," SAID CEOLLY. "NOW, MINA, FOR BLENT AND HER LADYSHP!" SHE GAVE A BITTER LITTLE LAUGH. "AND GOOD-BY TO COUSIN

Cecily's hands with kisses as she knelt by her side.

Harry!"

"Oh. Cecily---!"

"No, he shall never come to Blent."

HOW WOULD HARRY TAKE THIS DECREE OF BANISHMENT? MINA LOCKED UP
INTO HER FRIEND'S EYES, WONDERING. BUT DID NOT THE DINNER-PARTY AT MR
Disney's answer that?



XXIV

After the End of All

"My Dear Cousin—I shall faithfully obey your commands—Yours very truly,H. A. F. Tristram." And below—very formally—" The Lady Tristram of Bi init."

TO WRITE IT TOOK HIM NO MORE THAN A MOMENT—EVEN THOUGH HE WROTE FIRST, "THE COMMANDS OF THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE," AND DESTROYED THAT, ASHAMED OF THE STING OF MALICE IN IT. TO SEND IT TO THE POST WAS THE WORK OF ANOTHER MOMENT. THE THIRD FOUND HIM BACK AT HIS BLINKHAMPTON PLANS AND ELEVATIONS, CEOLY'S LETTER LYING NEGLECTED ON THE TABLE BY HIM. AFTER HALF AN HOUR'S WORK HE STOPPED SUDDENLY, REACHED FOR THE LETTER, TORE IT INTO SMALL FRAGMENTS, AND PLUNG THE SCRAPS INTO HIS WASTE-PAPER BASKET. JUST ABOUT THE SAME TIME CEOLLY AND MINIA WE'VE QUETTING INTO THE TRAIN TO RETURN TO Blent.

THIS RETURNING TO BLENT WAS EPIDEMIC—NOT SO STRANCE PERHAPS, SINCE MID-AUGUST WAS COME, AND ONLY THE PEOPLE WHO HAD TO STAYED IN TOWN. HARRY MET DUPLAY OVER AT BLINKHAMPTON; DUPLAY WAS TO JOIN HIS NECE AT MERRON IN ABOUT TEN DAYS. HE RAN AGAINST IVER IN THE STREET; IVER WAS OFF TO FARHOLINE BY THE AFTERNOON TRAIN; MR NEELD, HE MENTIONED, WAS COMING TO STAY WITH HIM FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS ON FRIDAY. EVEN SOUTHEND—WHOM HARRY ENCOUNTERED IN WHITEHALL, VERY HOT AND EXHAUSTED—OURSED LONDON AND TALKED OF A RUN DOWN TO IVER'S. BLENTMOUTH, FAIRHOLME, IVER'S, MERRON—THEY ALL MEANT BLENT. CECLLY had gone, and Mina; the rest were going there—everybody except the MAN WHO THREE MONTHS AGO HAD LOCKED TO SPEND HIS LIFE THERE AS ITS MASSIER.

CALCULATIONS, WHEN EVERYBODY WRITES THAT HE IS TAKING HIS VACATION, AND THAT THE MATTER SHALL HAVE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION ON HIS RETURN. HARRY GREW TERRIBLY TIRED OF THIS POLITE FORMULA. HE WANTED TO BULD BLINKHAMPTON OUT OF HAND, IN THE MONTHS OF AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER. THE WORK WOULD HAVE DONE HIM GOOD SERVICE. HE WAS SEEKING A

And Business Will grow slack when autumn arrives; it is increasingly Difficult for a man to bury hinself in deeds, or plans, or elevations, or

THE WORK WOULD HAVE DONE HIM GOOD SERVICE. HE WAS SEEKING A narcotic.

FOR HE WAS IN PAIN. IT CAME ON ABOUT A WEEK AFTER HE HAD SENT HIS OURT ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CEOLLY'S LETTER, LAYING HOLD OF HIM, HE TOLD HIMSELF, JUST BROALING HER HEYENDOW WAS TAKING HIS.

HOLIDAY, AND BLINKHAMPTON WOULD NOT GET ITSELF BOUGHT, AND SOLD, AND CONTRACTED FOR, AND PLANNED, AND LAID OUT, AND BULLT. THE POLITICANS WERE AT IT STILL, FOR TWO MORE HOT, WEARY, SULTRY WERS, BUT THEY WERE OF LITTLE USE. LADY FLORA HAD FLED TO SCOTLAND, DISNEY WAS SMOTHERED IN ARREARS OF WORK WHICH MUST BE MADE UP BEFORE HE GOT A REST. LONDON WAS FULL OF STRANGE FACES AND OUTLANDISH FOLK. "I MUST TAKE A HOLIDAY MYSELF," SAID HARRY IN A MOMENT OF SEEMING INSPIRATION. WHERE, WHERE, WHERE? HE SUPPERED UNDER THE SENSATION OF HAVING NOWHERE WHITHER HE WOULD NATURALLY GO, NO HOME, NO FLACE TO WHICH HE COULD RETURN AS TO HIS OWN. HE FOUND HIMSELF WISHING THAT HE HAD NOT TORN UP CEOLLY'S LETTER, HE REMEMBERED ITS GENERAL EFFECT SO WELL THAT HE WANTED TO READ THE VERY WORDS AGAIN, IN THE SECRET HOPE THAT THEY WONLD MODIEY AND SOFTEN HIS MEMORY. HIS COWN ANSWER MET, AND

DESTROYED THE HOPE, HE KNEW THAT HE WOULD HAVE RESPONDED TO anything friendly, had it been there.

Yet what did the letter mean? He interpreted it AS CEOLY HAD DECLARED HE WOULD. WHEN HE HELD BLENT, HE HELD IT IN PEACE OF MIND, THOUGH IN VIOLATION OF LAW, TILL ONE CAME WHO REPROACHED HIM IN A LIVING BODY AND WITH SPEAKING EYES; FACED WITH THAT, HE COULD FIND NO COMFORT IN BLENT.

CECILY VIOLATED NO LAW. BUT SHE VIOLATED NATURE. THE NATURAL RIGHT IN HIM.

THE DESPERATE REPLICE THAT HE HAD CHOSEN. HER ONLY REMEDY WAS TO FORBID HIM THE PLACE. HER INSTINCT DROVE HER TO THAT, AND THE INSTINCT, SO WELL UNDERSTOOD BY HIM. SO WELL KNOWN, WAS TO HIM REASON ENOUGH. She could not feel mistress of Blent while he was there. INDEED HE HAD NOT MEANT TO GO. HE HAD TOLD IVER THAT IN PERFECT GOOD FAITH. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN BAD TASTE FOR HIM TO THINK OF GOING-OF GOING ANYTHING LIKE SO SOON AS THIS WHENCE THEN CAME HIS NEW FEELING OF DESCLATION AND OF HURT? IT WAS PARTLY THAT HE WAS FORBIDDEN TO GO. IT WAS HARD TO REALIZE THAT HE COULD SEE BLENT NOW ONLY BY ANOTHER'S WILL OR SUFFERANCE. IT WAS EVEN MORE THAT NOW IT WAS NO CLIESTION OF REFRAINING FROM GOING AT ONCE. IN ORDER TO GO HEREAFTER WITH A BETTER GRACE. HE AWOKE TO THE IDEA THAT HE WAS NEVER TO GO. AND IN THE SAME MOMENT TO THE TRUTH THAT HE HAD ALWAYS IMAGINED HIMSELE GOING AGAIN. THAT BLENT HAD ALWAYS HELD A PLACE IN HIS PICTURE OF THE FUTURE. THAT WHATEVER HE WAS DOING OR ACHIEVING OR WINNING. THERE IT WAS IN THE BACKGROUND. NOW IT WAS THERE NO MORE. HE COULD ALMOST SAY WITH Mina and with Cecily herself, "This is the end of it." WHAT THEN OF THE IMPRESSIONS MINA HAD GATHERED FROM MR DISNEY'S DINNER-PARTY? IT CAN ONLY BE SAID THAT WHEN PEOPLE OF IMPRESSIONABLE NATURES STUDY OTHERS OF LIKE TEMPERAMENT THEY SHOULD NOT GENERALIZE FROM THEIR CONDUCT AT PARTIES. IN SOCIETY DINNERS ARE EATEN IN DISGUISE. SOMETIMES INTENTIONAL. SOMETIMES UN CONSCIOUS, BUT AS A RULE QUITE IMPENETRABLE. IF HARRY'S HAD BEEN UNCONSCIOUS. IF THE MOOD HAD played the man, the deception was the more complete. HE WENT TO SEE LADY EVENSWOOD ONE DAY: SHE HAD SENT TO EXPRESS HER DESIRE FOR A TALK BEFORE SHE FLED TO THE COUNTRY. SHE HAD MUCH THAT WAS PLEASANT TO SAY, MUCH OF THE PROSPECTS OF HIS SUCCESS, OF HIS "training-on." as easy-mannered Theo had put it to Mina Zabriska. "And if you do, you'll be able to think now that you've done it all off your

own bat," she ended.

TO HER THEN HIS PRESENCE WOULD BE INTO FRABLE. AND SHE COLLD NOT FIND.

"OH, I DOUBT IF THERE'S ANY SUCH THING AS AN ABSOLUTE STRENGTH OR AN ABSOLUTE WEAKNESS. THEY'RE RELATIVE WHAT'S AN ADVANTAGE IN ONE thing is a disadvantage in another."

"I UNDERSTAND," HE SMILED. "MY CONFOUNDED CONCEIT MAY HELP ME ON IN THE WORLD, BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE ME A GRATEFUL FRIEND OR A PLEASANT companion?"

"I believe George Southend agrees as far as the grateful friend part of IT IS CONCEINED. AND I'M TOLD LORD HOVE DOES AS TO THE REST. BUT THEN IT was only Flora Disney herself who said so."

"And what do you say?"

"Oh, pride's tolerable in anybody except a lover," she declared.

"WELL. I'VE KNOWN LOVERS TOO HUMBLE. I TOLD ONE SO ONCE HE BELEVED.

"You've found out my weaknesses, I see," he laughed.

"PER-HAPS THAT'S TRUE. HE'S VERY LIKELY GOT THE PRIDE BY NOW." HE SMILED at his thoughts of Bob Broadley.

"You gave him courage, not pride, Mr Tristram."

me, went in, and won,"

"And you've settled down in the new groove?" she asked.

HE HESTATED A MOMENT. "OH. NEARLY. POSSIBLY

THERE'S STILL A TOUCH OF

THE 'DESDICHADO,' ABOUT ME. HIS WOULD BE THE ONLY SHIELD I COULD CARRY, you see."

"STOP! WELL, I FORGIVE YOU. YOU'RE NOT OFTEN BITTER ABOUT THAT. BUT YOU'RE very bitter about something, Mr Tristram."

"I WANT TO WORK, AND NOBODY WILL IN AUGUST. YOU CAN'T GET THE BETTER OF YOUR ENEMIES IF THEY'RE WITH THEIR FAMILIES AT MARGATE OR IN THE "OH, GO DOWN AND STAY AT BLENT. NO, I'M SERIOUS. YOU SAY YOU'RE PROUD.
THERE'S A GOOD WAY OF SHOWING GOOD PRIDE. GO AND STAY IN THE VERY
HOUSE. IF YOU DO THAT, I SHALL THINK WELL OF YOU—AND EVEN BETTER THAN I
think now of the prospects."
"I've not been invited."
"Poor girl, she's afraid to invite you! Write and say you're coming."
"SHE'D GO AWAY. YES, SHE WOULD. SHE CONSENTS TO LIVE THERE ONLY ON

Engadine."

condition that I never come. She's told me so."

"I'M TOO OLD A WOMAN TO KNOW YOUR FAMILY! YOU URSET THE WISDOM OF ages, and I haven't time to learn anything new."

"I'M NOT THE LEAST SURPRISED. IF I WERE IN HER PLACE, I SHOULD HATE TO HAVE her there."

"Nonsense. In a month or two----"

"IF ANYTHING'S CERTAIN, IT'S THAT I SHALL NEVER GO TO BLENT AS LONG AS MY cousin owns it."
"I call it downright wicked."

"We share the crime, she and I. She lays down the law, I willingly obey."
"Willingly?"

"MY REASON IS CONVINCED. MAYBE I'M A LITTLE HOMESICK. BUT YOUR MONTH or two will serve the purpose there."

"There's a great deal more in this than you're telling me, Mr Tristram."

"Put everything you can imagine into it, and the result's the same."

"So MANY YOUNG MEN IN THEIR EARLY TWENTIES SUCCEED IN THAT!" SHE murmured mockingly.

"Don't those who succeed in anything succeed in that?"

"NOT ALL, HAPPLY—AND NONE WOULD IF THEY WERE YOUR MOTHER'S SONS. MY

SHE SIGHED AND SAT FOR A MOMENT IN PENSIVE SILENCE. HARRY SEEMED.

"I'm going to think of nothing but my work." he announced.

dear boy, just open a window in you anywhere—I know you keep them SHUT WHEN YOU CAN—BUT JUST OPEN EVEN A CHINK, AND ADDIE PEEPS OUT DIRECTLY! WHICH MEANS GREAT SUCCESS OR GREAT FAILURE, HARRY—AND OTHER THINGS ON THE SAME SCALE, I FANCY. THANK GOODNESS—OH, YES, SAVING YOUR PRESENCE, REALLY THANK GOODNESS—I'M NOT LIKE THAT MYSEIf!"

"Shall I prove you wrong?"
"I'm SAFE. I CANT LIVE TO SEE IT. AND YOU COULDN'T PROVE ME WRONG without opening all the windows."

"And that I shouldn't do, even to you?"

"Do you ever do it to yourself?"

"PERHAPS NOT," HE LAUCHED. "BUT ONCE A STORM BLEW THEM ALL IN, LADY

to ponder too.

Evenswood, and left me without any screen, and without defences."

"HAVE ANOTHER STORM THEN," SHE COUNSELLED. SHE LAID A HAND ON HS
arm. "Go to Blent."

"As THNGS STAND, I CAN NEVER GO TO BLENT, I CAN GO ONLY TO—Blinkhampton."

"What does little Mina Zabriska say to that?"

"Oh, everything that comes into her head. I suppose, and very volubly." "I like her." said the old lady with emphasis. "IS THERE SUCH A THING AS AN ABSOLUTE LIKING, LADY EVENSWOOD? WHAT'S PLEASANT AT ONE TIME IS ABOM! NABLE AT ANOTHER. AND I'VE KNOWN Madame Zabriska at the other time."

"You were probably at the other time yourself." "I thought we should agree about the relativity!"

SAY IT'S SOMETIMES VERY SUB! AH, WELL, YOU'RE HUMAN IN THE END. YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY FORGETTING BLENT—AND YOU SPEND YOUR TIME WITH AN OLD WOMAN BECAUSE SHE CAN TALK TO YOU ABOUT IT! GO AWAY AND ARRANGE YOUR LIFE. AND COME BACK AND TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT. AND IF YOU'RE

"THERE MAY ALWAYS BE A SUBSTRATUM OF FRIENDSHIP." SHE ARGUED. "YOU'LL

DISCONTENTED WITH LIFE. REVEWBER THAT YOU TOO WILL REACH THE STAGE OF being just told about it some day." THINGS WILL COME HOME TO A MAN AT LAST. STRIVE HE NEVER SO DESPERATELY AGAINST THEM-IF THE THINGS ARE TRUE AND THE MAN EVER

HONEST WITH HIMSELF. IT WAS ONE NIGHT, A LITTLE WHILE AFTER THIS CONVERSATION. THAT THE TRUTH CAME TO HARRY TRISTRAM AND FOUND ACCEPTANCE OR AT LEAST SURRENDER. HIS MIND HAD WANDERED BACK TO THAT SCENE IN THE LONG GALLERY, AND HE HAD FALLEN TO QUESTIONING ABOUT

HIS OWN ACTION. THERE WAS A NEW LIGHT ON IT. AND THE NEW LIGHT SHOWED. HIM TRUTH. "I MUST FACE IT: IT'S NOT BLENT." HE SAID ALOUD. IF IT WERE BLENT. IT

PICTURE OF BLENT VANISHED. HE WAS IN LOVE WITH HER THEN: AND WHAT WAS

WAS NOW BLENT ONLY AS A SOENE, A FRAME, A BACKGROUND. WHEN HE PICTURED BLENT. CECILY WAS THERE IF HE THOUGHT OF HER ELSEWHERE. THE

THE QUALITY THAT LADY EVENSWOOD HAD PRAISED IN A LOVER? LET HIM CULTIVATE IT HOW HE WOULD-AND THE CULTURE WOULD BE DIFFICULT-YET IT WOULD NOT SERVE HERE. IF HE WENT TO BLENT AGAINST CECILY'S COMMANDS

AND HIS OWN PROMSE, HE COULD MEET WITH NOTHING BUT A REBUFF. YES, HE WAS IN LOVE, AND HE RECOGNIZED THE IMPASSE AS FULLY AS MINA HERSELF. ALTHOUGH WITH MORE SELF-RESTRAINT. BUT HE WAS GLAD TO KNOW THE TRUTH: IT STRENGTHENED HIM. AND IT FREED HIM FROM A SCORN OF HIMSELF WITH WHICH HE HAD BECOME AFFLICTED. IT WAS INTOLERABLE THAT A MAN SHOULD BE LOVE-SICK FOR A HOUSE, IT WAS SOME SOLACE TO FIND THAT THE HOUSE, IN ORDER TO hold his affections, must hold a woman too. "Now I know where I am." SAID HARRY. HE KNEW WHAT HE HAD TO MEET NOW: HE THOUGHT HE KNEW HOW HE COULD TREAT HIMSELF. HE WENT DOWN TO BLINKHAMPTON THE NEXT MORNING, HARRIED HIS BUILDER OUT OF A HOLIDAY EXPEDITION, AND GOT A USEFUL BIT OF WORK IN HAND. IT WAS, HE SUPPOSED. INEVITABLE THAT CEOLY SHOULD JOURNEY WITH HIM IN THE SPIRIT TO BLINKHAMPTON: HE FLATTERED HIMSELF THAT SHE GOT VERY LITTLE CHANCE WHILE HE WAS THERE. SHE WAS THE ENEWY, HE DECLARED, WITH A HALF-PEEVISH HALF-HUMOROUS SMILE. IT WAS NOT ALTOGETHER WITHOUT AMUSEMENT TO INVENT ALL MANNER OF DEVICES AND ALL SORTS OF OCCUPATIONS TO EVADE AND ELUDE HER. HE VENTURED TO DECLARE—FOLLOWING THE PRECEDENTS—THAT SHE HAD TREATED HIM SHAMERULLY. THAT BROKE DOWN, CANDOR INSISTED ONCE AGAIN ON HIS ADMITTING THAT HE HIMSELF WOULD HAVE DONE EXACTLY THE SAME THING. IT NEVER OCCURRED TO HIM TO REGRET, EVEN FOR A MOMENT. THAT HE HAD NOT TAKEN HER AT HER WORD, AND HAD NOT ACCEPTED HER OFFER. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN TO SPOIL HIS DREAM, NOT TO REALIZE IT. HE ASKED PERFECTION OR NOTHING. BEING STILL UNHEALED OF THAT PRESUMPTUOUS WAY OF HIS. WHICH BADE THE WORLD GO HANG IF IT WOULD NOT GIVE HIM EXACTLY WHAT he chose. The Tristram motto was still. "No compromise!"

An unexpected ally came to his assistance. He received a sudden summons from Mr Disney. He found him at work, rather weary and dishevelled. He let Harry in at once, but kept him waiting while he transactied some other business. Here was the rlace to see him, not

IN A DRAWING-ROOM, HS BRUSQUE WORDS AND QUOK DECISIONS BNABLED HIM TO DO TWO MEN'S WORK. HE TURNED TO HARRY AND SAID WITHOUT

preface:

COMPANY, YOU KNOW, AS WELL AS CURSELVES. ANOTHER INSTANCE OF MY weakness! Lord Murchison's going over for us. He starts in a fortnight. He asked me to recommend him a secretary. Will you go?"

HERE WAS HELP IN AVOIDING CECILY. BUT WHAT ABOUT BLINKHAMPTON?

Harry hesitated a moment.

"I SHOULD LIKE IT. BUT I'VE CONTRACTED CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS OF A BUSINESS

"WE'RE GOING TO ARBITRATE THIS BARILLIAND QUESTION, ON BEHALF OF THE

kind at home," he said.

"Well, IF You're Bound, KEEP Your Word and do the Work. IF You Find
You're Not, I Should advise You to take this. It's a good beginning. This
Is Tuesday. Tell me on Saturday. Good-by." He rang a hand-bell on
The Table, and, as his secretary entered, said. "The Canadian papers.

please."

"I'm very grateful to you, anyhow."

"That's all right, Tristram. Good-by."

THERE WAS NO DOUBT WHAT WOULD BE THE PRACTICAL WAY OF SHOWING gratitude. Harry went out.

HE LETT MR DISNEY'S PRESENCE DETERMINED TO ACCEPT THE OFFER IF IVER COULD SPARE HIS SERVICES FOR THE TIME. THE DETERMINING CAUSE WAS STILL Blent, or his cousin at Blent. Blinkhampton was not far enough away; it RATHER THREW HIM WITH PEOPLE WHO BELONGED TO THE OLD LIFE THAN PARTIED.

HIM FROM THEM. HE WAS WEAK HIMSELF TOO; WHILE THE PEOPLE WERE AT HAND, HE WOULD SEEK THEM, AS HE HAD SOUGHT LADY EVENSWOOD. AT THE ARBITRATION HE WOULD BE FAR OFF, BEYOND THE NARROW SEAS AND AMONG

ARBITRATION HE WOULD BE FAR OFF, BEYOND THE NARROW SEAS AND AMONG FOLK WHO, RECOGNIZING THE PECULIARITY OF HIS POSITION, WOULD MAKE A POINT OF NOT MENTIONING BLENT OR SPEAKING OF ANYBODY CONNECTED WITH

IT. IT WAS FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW THAT HE WAS INCLINED TOWARD THE OFFER, AND HE DID NOT DISCUSE IT FROM HINSELF; BUT FOR IT HE WOULD RATHER HAVE CONE ON WITH BLINKHAMPTON, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE HAD A FREE HAND. THERE, WHILE HE COULD GO TO THE ARBITRATION ONLY AS A SUBORDINATE, BLEVI APART, THE OFFER WAS VALUABLE TO HIM AS A SIGN OF DISNEY'S APPRECIATION. rather than on its own account HE WENT HOME AND WROTE TO IVER. THE LETTER WEIGHED ALL CONSIDERATIONS SAVE THE ONE WHICH REALLY WEIGHED WITH HIM: HE PUT HIMSELF FAIRLY IN lver's hands but did not conceal his own wish: he knew that if lver were AGAINST THE IDEA ON SOLID BUSINESS GROUNDS. HE WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY HARRY'S PERSONAL PRETERBNCE. BUT THE BUSINESS REASONS, WHEN EXAMINED. DID NOT SEEM VERY SERIOUS, AND HARRY THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD GET LEAVE TO GO. HE ROSE FROM HIS WRITING WITH A LONG SIGH. IF HE

RECEIVED THE ANSWER HE EXPECTED. HE WAS AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS: AND HE HAD CHOSEN THE PATH THAT LED DIRECTLY AND FINALLY AWAY FROM Blent. AN EVENING PAPER WAS BROUGHT TO HIM. A TREMENDOUS HEAD UNE CAUGHT

HIS NOTICE. "RESIGNATION OF LORD HOVE! HE WILL NOT ARBITRATE ABOUT BARILLAND. WILL THE GOVERNMENT BREAK UP?" PROBABLY NOT. THOUGHT HARRY: AND IT WAS ODD TO REFLECT THAT, IF LORD HOVE HAD GOT HIS WAY, HE WOULD HAVE LOST HIS HEROIC REMEDY. SO GREAT THINGS AND SMALL TOUCH AND INTERSECT ONE ANOTHER. PERHAPS THEO (WHO COULD NOW SETTLE THAT

QUESTION ABOUT THE KICKING WITH HIS FRIENDS) WOULD MAINTAIN THAT FLORA DISNEY HAD TALKED TOO MUCH TO HARRY AT DINNER. INSTEAD OF TAKING ALL WAS VERY FIERCE. IMPATIENT OF HIS QUIET ROOMS. HE WENT OUT INTO THE

pains to soothe Lord Hove! IT WAS HIS LAST STRUGGLE: HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT HE COULD WIN, BUT THE FIGHT

CROWDED STREETS. AT FIRST HE FOUND HIMSELF BNYYING EVERYBODY HE PASSED—THE CABMAN ON HIS BOX. THE ROUGH YOUNG FELLOWS ESCAPED

FROM THE FACTORY, THE MAN WHO SOLD MATCHES AND HAD NO CARES BEYOND

FOOD AND A BED. BUT PRESENTLY HE FORGOT THEM ALL AND WALKED AMONG

SHADOWS. HE WAS AT BLENT IN SPIRIT, SOMETIMES WITH ADDIE TRISTRAM.

SOMETIMES WITH CECILY. HIS IMAGINATION UNDID WHAT HIS HAND HAD

BACK AND A DEAD DULNESS SETTLED ON HIS SOUL. HALF AFRAID OF HIMSELF, HE TURNED ROUND AND MADE FOR HOME AGAIN: HE COULD NOT BE SURE OF HIS SELF-CONTROL. BUT AGAIN HE MASTERED THAT, AND AGAIN PACED THE STREETS. NOW IN A GRIM RESOLUTION TO TIRE MIND AND BODY. SO THAT THESE VISIONS SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO WORK ON AND. FINDING BLANK UNRESPONSIVE WEARINESS. SHOULD GO THEIR WAYS AND LEAVE HIM IN AN INSENSIBLE fatique. Ever since he disclaimed his inheritance he had been living in A STRESS OF EXCITEMENT THAT HAD GIVEN HIM A FORTITUDE HALF UNNATURAL: now this support seemed to fail, and with it went the power to bear. THE REMEDY WORKED WELL; AT EIGHT O'CLOCK HE FOUND HIMSELF VERY TIRED, VERY HUNGRY, UNEXPECTEDLY COMPOSED, HE TURNED INTO A LITTLE RESTAURANT TO DINE. THE PLACE WAS CROWDED. AND RATHER SHAMEFACEDLY (AS IS THE NATIONAL WAY) HE SAT DOWN AT A SMALL TABLE OPPOSITE A GIRL IN A LIGHT-BLUE BLOUSE AND A VERY BIG HAT, WHO WAS FATING RISOTTO AND DRINKING LAGER BEER. SHE ASSUMED AN AIR OF EXAGGERATED PRIMNESS AND GENTILITY, KEEPING HER EYES DOWN TOWARD HER PLATE, AND PUTTING VERY SMALL QUANTITIES INTO HER MOUTH AT A TIME. GLAD OF DISTRACTION, HARRY watched her with amusement. At last she glanced up stealthily. "A fine evening," he said, as he started on his chop. "VERY SEASONABLE," SHE BEGAN IN A MINCING TONE, BUT SUDDENLY SHE BROKE OFF TO EXCLAIM IN A VOICE AND ACCENT MORE NATURAL AND spontaneous, "Good gracious, I've seen you before, haven't I?" "I'm not aware that I ever had the honor." said Harry. "WELL. I KNOW YOUR FACE, ANYHOW." SHE WAS LOOKING AT HIM AND searching her memory. "You're not at the halls, are you?" "No. I'm not at the halls."

"WELL, I DO KNOW YOUR FACE-WHY, YES, I'VE SEEN YOUR FACE IN THE

DONE, HE WAS SMLING AGAIN AT THE EFFORTS OF DUPLAY TO FRIGHTEN OR TO DISPLACE HIM. THUS HE WOULD BE HAPPY FOR A MOMENT. TILL REALITY CAME PAPERS. I SHALL GET IT IN A MINUTE NOW-DON'T YOU TELL ME." SHE STUDIED. HIM WITH DETERMINATION HARRY ATE AWAY IN CONTENTED AM ISEMENT "Yes. vou're the man who—why, yes, you're Tristram?"

some job. That's what I say."

"I WISH I ALWAYS SAID—AND THOUGHT—THINGS AS SENSIBLE" AND HE TOOK

HERE'S LUCK TO YOU. SIR! (HE HAD BEEN A LORD EVEN IF HE WERE NOW A

builder). You did the straight thing in the end."

EXTREMELY CIVIL. "BUT THERE, IT ISN'T SO MUCH WHAT YOUR JOB IS AS HAVING.

"YOU SURPRISE ME!" THE OBSERVATION WAS EVIDENTLY MEANT TO BE

"Gone into the building-trade," he answered.

"YOU MAY SAY ROMANCE!" SHE CONCEDED HEARTILY. "TO BE A LORD. and——!" She leant forward. "I say, how do you get your living now?"

"THAT MUST HAVE PROVED A DISAPPOINTMENT, I'M AFRAID. THE ROMANCE was better than the hero "

"Well, to think of that! Meeting you! Well, I shall have something to tell THE GIRLS. WHY. A FRIEND OF MINE WROTE DOWN TO THE COUNTRY, SPECIAL, FOR

COURAGE TO OFFER HER ANOTHER GLASS OF LAGER. SHE ACCEPTED WITH A SLIGHT RECRUDESCENCE OF PRIMNESS: BUT HER EYES DID NOT LEAVE HIM NOW. "I NEVER DID!" HE HEARD HER MURMUR AS SHE RAISED HER GLASS. "WELL

"What?" asked Harry, a little startled. "WELL. SOME DID SAY AS YOU'D KNOWN IT ALL ALONG. OH. I DON'T SAY SO:

some did."

HARRY BEGAN TO LAUGH. "IT DOESN'T MATTER, DOES IT, IF I DID THE STRAIGHT

thing in the end?"

"That's right, I'm Tristram."

vour photo."

know what that is! Well, sir, I'll say good-evening." "GOOD-EVENING, MSS, AND THANK YOU VERY MUCH," SAID HARRY, RISING AS SHE ROSE. HIS MANNER HAD ITS OLD TOLICH OF LORDLINESS. HIS ERIENDS. criticised that sometimes; this young lady evidently approved. "You've no cause to thank me." said she, with an admiring look.

"I'M SURE AS I SHOULDN'T BLAME YOU IF YOU HAD BEEN A BIT TEMPTED. I

"YES, I HAVE, AS IT HAPPENED, I BELIEVE I WANTED SOMEBODY TO REMIND ME THAT I HAD DONE THE STRAIGHT THING IN THE BND, AND I'M MUCH OBLIGED to you for doing it."

"Well. I shall have something to tell the girls!" she said again in wondering tones, as she nodded to him and turned slowly away. HARRY WAS COMFORTED. THE STRESS OF HIS PAIN WAS PAST, HE SAT ON OVER HIS SIMPLE MEAL IN A LEISURELY COMFORTABLE FASHION. HE WAS HAPPY IN

THE FACT THAT HIS BNBWY HAD AT LEAST NOTHING WITH WHICH SHE COULD REPROACH HIM. THAT HE HAD NO REASON FOR NOT HOLDING HIS HEAD ERECT. BEFORE HER. AND THE GIRL'S PHILOSOPHY HAD BEEN GOOD. HE HAD A JOB. AND THAT WAS THE GREAT THING IN THIS WORLD. HE FRIT CONFIDENT THAT THE STRUGGLE WAS WON NOW, AND THAT IT WOULD NEVER HAVE TO BE FOUGHT AGAIN IN SO SEVERE A FASHION. HIS SELF-RESPECT WAS INTACT: IF HE HAD BEEN

beaten, he would never have forgiven himself. HE REGAINED HIS ROOMS. A LETTER LAY WAITING FOR HIM ON THE TABLE. HE opened it and found that it was from Mina Zabriska. "WE ARE BACK HERE" SHE WROTE. "I AM STAYING AT BLENT TILL MY UNCLE

COMES DOWN, I MUST WRITE AND SAY GOOD-BY TO YOU. I DARE SAY WE SHALL NEVER MEET AGAIN, OR MERELY BY CHANCE. I AM VERY UNHAPPY

ABOUT IT ALL, BUT WITH TWO PEOPLE LIKE CECILY AND YOU NOTHING ELSE COULD HAVE HAPPENED. I SEE THAT NOW, AND I'M NOT GOING TO TRY TO INTERFERE ANY MORE. I SHAN'T ASK YOU TO FORGIVE ME FOR INTERFERING.

BECAUSE YOU'VE MADE THE RESULT QUITE ENOUGH PUNISHMENT FOR

ANYTHING I DID WRONG. AND NOW CEOLY GOES ABOUT LOOKING JUST LIKE YOU—HARD AND FROUD AND GRIM, AND SHE'S BESUN TO MOVE THINGS about and alter arrangements at Blent. That's what brings it home TO ME MOST OF ALL. ('AND TO ME,' INTERPOSED HARRY AS HE READ.) IF I WAS THE SORT OF WOMAN YOU THINK ME, I SHOULD GO ON WRITING TO YOU. BUT I SHANT WRITE AGAIN. I AM GOING TO STAY AT MERRON THROUGH THE WINTER, AND SINCE YOU WON'T COME HERE, THIS IS THE LAST OF ME FOR A long time anythow. Oh. you Tristrams! Good-by.

"Poor little Imp!" said Harry, "She's a very good sort; and she seems

MINA ZABRISKA."

ABOUT RIGHT. It'S THE BND OF EVERYTHING." HE PAUSED AND LOOKED ROUND.
"EXCEPT OF THESE ROOMS—AND MY WORK—AND, WELL, LIFE AT LARGE, YOU KNOW!" HE LAUGHED IN THE SUDDEN REALIZATION OF HOW MUCH WAS LEFT AFTER THERE WAS AN BND OF ALL—LIFE TO BE LIVED, WORK TO BE DONE, BNUDYMENTS TO BE WON. HE COULD KNOW THIS, ALTHOUGH HE COULD HARDLY YET FEEL IT IN ANY VERY GENUINE FASHION. HE COULD PROJECT HIS MIND FORWARD TO A FUTURE APPRECIATION OF WHAT HE COULD NOT AT THE MOMENT RELISH, AND HE SAW THAT LIFE WOULD BE FULL AND RICH WITH HIM, EVEN ALTHOUGH THERE WERE AN BND OF ALL. "BUT I DON'T BELIEVE," HE SAID TO HIMSELF, SLOWLY SMLING, "THAT I SHOULD EVER HAVE COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT OR TO—TO FUFIL IT UNLESS I HAD—WHAT DID THE GIRL SAY?—DONE THE STRAIGHT THINS IN THE BND. AND COME OUT OF BLENT, WELL, OLD BLENT, GOOD-

she said.

by!" He crumpled up Mina's letter, and flung it into the grate.

THE MAID-SERVANT OPENED THE DOOR. "TWO GENTLEMEN TO SEE YOU, SR."

"Oh, say I'm busy——" he began.

"WE MUST SEE YOU, FLEASE," INSISTED MR JENKINSON NEELD, WITH UNUSUAL FRANCESS. HE TURNED TO THE MAN WITH HM, SAYING: "HERE IS MR Tristram, Colonel Edge."

XXV

There's the Lady Too!

THERE WAS NOTHING VERY REMARKABLE ABOUT COLONEL WILMOT EDGE. HE WAS A SLIGHTLY BULT, TRIM MAN, BUT HIS TRIMNESS WAS NOT DISTINCTIVELY MILITARY. HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ANYTHING, SAVE THAT JUST NOW THE TAN ON HIS FACE WITNESSED TO AN OUT-OF-DOOR LIFE. HIS MANNER WAS COLD, HIS METHOD OF SPEECH LESURELY AND METHODICAL. AT FIRST SIGHT HARRY SAW NOTHING IN HIM TO MODIFY THE BELIEF IN WHICH HE HAD GROWN UP—THAT THE EDGES WERE AN UNATTRACTIVE RACE, UNABLE TO APPRECIATE TRISTRAMS, MUCH LESS WORTHY TO MATE WITH THEM. HE GAVE THE COLONEL A CHAIR RATHER GRUDGINGLY, AND TURNED TO OLD MR NEELD FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THE VISIT.

NEELD HAD FUSSED HIMSELF INTO A SEAT ALREADY, AND HAD DRAWN SOME SHEETS OF PAPER COVERED WITH TYPE-WRITING FROM HIS POCKET. HE SPREAD THEM OUT, SMOOTHED THEM DOWN, CLEARED HIS THROAT, AND ANSWERED HARRY'S LOOK BY A GLANCE AT EDGE. MR NEELD WAS IN A FIDGET, A FIDGET OF importance and expectancy.

"YOU WILL KNOW," SAID EDGE GRAVELY, "THAT NO ORDINARY MATTER HAS LED ME TO CALL ON YOU, MR TRISTRAM. HOWEVER LITTLE WE MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PAST, WE HAVE TO RECOGNIZE IT. I SHOULD NOT, UNDER ORDINARY ORCUMSTANCES, HAVE SOUGHT YOUR ACQUANTANCE. YOU MUST CONSIDER THIS INTERVIEW PURELY AS ONE OF A BUSINESS KIND. I HAVE JUST RETURNED TO ENGLAND. FOR TWO MONTHS I HAVE BEEN OUT OF THE WAY OF RECEIVING ONLY THIS OR NEWSPAPERS. I WENT TO THE IMPERIUM CLUB TO-NIGHT. —I ARROUNT THIS MORNING—AND DINED IN NEELD'S COMPANY, AS IT CHANCED. WE

SPOKE OF YOU. AND I LEARNT WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE I LEFT ENGLAND. I

COLONEL'S PREAMBLE EXCITED LITTLE INTEREST IN HARRY. THE REACTION OF HS struggle was on him; he was courteously but not keenly attentive.

"It is not agreeable to me to speak of My Brother to you, Mr Tristram Doubtless we should differ if we discussed his character and conduct. It is not necessary."

"Is SIR RANDOLPH EDGE CONCERNED IN WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY TO ME?" asked Harry.

"Yes, I am sorry to say he is. Another person is concerned also."

"ONE MOMENT. YOU ARE, OF COURSE, AWARE THAT I NO LONCER REPRESENT MY FAMILY? LEGALLY I'M NOT EVEN A MEMBER OF IT. It IS POSSIBLE THAT YOU OUGHT TO ADDRESS YOURSELF TO LADY TRISTRAM—MY COUSIN—OR TO HER lawyers."

NEELD WAS LISTENING AND FIDGETING WITH HIS SHEETS OF PAPER. THE

have lost no time in calling on you."

known to you. Mr Tristram?"

"MY MOTHER WAS NEVER IN PARIS AFTER THAT, I BELIEVE. IT WOULD BE AT THAT time, Colonel Edge."

"YOU ARE AWARE THAT LATER—AFTER HE PARTED FROM LADY TRISTRAM—MY

"That would be when Lady Tristram was residing with my brother?"

"Yes, I've heard my mother speak of meeting her in Paris,"

brother went to Russia, where he had business interests?"
"I HAVE VERY GOOD REASON TO KNOW THAT." HARRY SMLED AT MR NEELD, WHO

and upright in an eager attention.
"What I am about to say is known, I believe, to myself alone—and to

HAD APPARENTLY GOT ALL HE COULD OUT OF HIS PAPERS. AND WAS SITTING QUIET

NEED HARDLY ADD. SHE RASSED UNDER THE NAME OF MADAME VALFIER,
AND SHE RESIDED IN THE HOUSE ADJOINING RANDOLPH'S. LADY TRISTRAM
WAS NOT, OF COURSE, AWARE OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN HER AND MY
BROTHER I WILL COME NOW TO THE TIME OF MY BROTHER'S DEATH. WHEN HE FELL
ILL, HE HAD JUST COMPLETED THE SALE OF ONE OF HIS RUSSIAN PROPERTIES.
LADY TRISTRAM DID NOT, I DARE SAY, SHEAK OF THE COMTESSE'S CHARACTER
to you?"

"I NEVER REMEMBER HEARING MY MOTHER SHEAK OF ANYBODY'S CHARACTER,"
said Harry with a smille.

"SHE WAS A BRILLIANT WOMAN—SHE DIED, BY THE WAY, TWO OR THREE YEARS
AGO—BUT EXTRAVAGANT AND FOND OF MONEY. SHE PREVAILED ON MY
BROTHER TO PROMSE HER THE PRICE OF THIS PROPERTY AS A GET. THE SLM

NEELD HERE, TO WHOM I TOLD IT TO-NIGHT. WHILE MY BROTHER WAS IN RUSSIA, HE WAS JOINED BY THE CONTESSE. SHE PAID HIM A VISIT—SECRETLY. I

HARRY NODDED. HERE SEEMED TO BE SOME POSSIBLE LIGHT ON THE reasons for the interview.

"This money was to be paid—in gold—on a certain day. I speak now from information imparted to me subsequently by the Comtesse herself. It was given under a promse of secrecy which I have kept hitherto, but now find myself compelled in honesty to break."

"There can be no question of what is your duty, Edge," Mr Neeld put in

was considerable—about seven thousand pounds."

THE COMTESSE. THE MONEY WAS PAYABLE IN PETERSBURG. HE COULD NOT HOPE TO BE WELL ENOUGH TO GO THERE. AT HER SUGGESTION HE SIGNED A PAPER AUTHORIZING PAYMENT TO BE MADE TO HER OR TO AN AGENT APPOINTED BY HER. THE MONEY BEING DESTINED FOR HER ULTIMATELY, THIS

naturally seemed the best arrangement. She could go and receive the

"I THINK NOVE. MY BROTHER DURING HIS ILLNESS DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH

"It's possible that weight was given to that consideration too, but it is not very material. The Comiesse, then, was in possession of this authority. My Brother's illness took a turn for the worse. To be Brief, he died before the day came on which the money was to be paid."

"And she presented the authority all the same?" asked Harry. "And got the money, did she?"

"That is precisely the course she adopted," assented Colonel Edge.

HARRY TOOK A WALK UP AND DOWN THE ROOM AND RETURNED TO THE

"I'M VERY SENSIBLE OF YOUR KINDNESS IN COMING HERE TO-DAY," HE SAID, "AND YOUR CONDUCT IS THAT OF A MAN OF HONOR. BUT AT THIS POINT I'LL STOP.

"Then if she robbed anybody she robbed you?"

"Certainly; and three years later she came and told me so."

MONEY, OR SEND FOR IT-AS A FACT SHE WENT IN PERSON WHEN THE TIME

"QUITE SO. AND THE TRANSACTION WOULD NOT APPEAR ON THE FACE OF SIR.

Randolph's accounts or bank-book." Harry suggested.

came—and all would be settled "

hearthrug.

YOU, PLEASE. I'M AWARE THAT prima facie THE LAW WOULD PRONOUNCE ME
TO BE SIR RANDOLPH'S SON. THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN DISCLAIMED ON OUR
SIDE AND COULD EASILY BE DISPROVED ON YOURS. I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH
SIR Randolph Edge or his property."

The Colonel listened unmoved.

"IN ANY CASE YOU WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH MY BROTHER'S PROPERTY,"
he remarked. "He left a will by which I was constituted sole legatee."

"Then how in the world does it concern me?" cried Harry impatiently.
"YOU PUT YOUR FINGER ON THE SPOT, MR TRISTRAM, BUT YOU TOOK IT OFF AGAIN.

"YES. THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE REVOKED BY HIS DEATH. AT LEAST I SUPPOSE. THERE'S NO QUESTION OF THAT? DID SHE GET AT THEM BEFORE THEY HEARD OF the death?"

You said she presented the authority all the same."

"THIS MONEY WAS PAYABLE ON THE 22ND JUNE—THE 10TH AS IT'S RECKONED IN RUSSIA—BUT WE NEEDN'T TROUBLE ABOUT THAT. AS YOU AND

NEELD ARE BOTH AWARE. ON THE 18TH MY BROTHER FELL INTO A COLLAPSE which was mistaken for death "

"YES, THE 18TH," MURMURED NEELD, REFERRING TO THE PAPER BEFORE HIM.

AND READING JOSIAH CHOLDERTON'S ACCOUNT OF WHAT MADAME DE KRIES had told him at Heidelberg. "From that attack he rallied temporarily, but not until his death had been reported."

"I am not the man to forget that circumstance," said Harry.

"THE REPORT OF HIS DEATH WAS, OF COURSE, CONTRADICTED IMMEDIATELY. The doctor attending him saw to that."

"Naturally: and I suppose the Comtesse would see to it too."

"AND THE ONLY IMPORTANCE THAT THE OCCURRENCE OF THE 18TH HAS FOR US AT PRESENT IS THAT, ACCORDING TO THE COMTESSE'S STORY, IT SUGGESTED TO THE

DOCTOR THE COURSE WHICH SHE. ON HIS PROMPTING AS SHE DECLARED AND CERTAINLY WITH HIS CONNIVANCE, AFTERWARD ADOPTED. MY BROTHER, HAVING RALLIED FROM HIS FIRST COLLAPSE, KEPT UP THE FIGHT A LITTLE WHILE LONGER. IT WAS. HOWEVER, PLAIN TO THE DOCTOR THAT HE COULD LIVE BUT A VERY SHORT

TIME. THE COMTESSE KNEW THIS, MY BROTHER WAS NOT IN A CONDITION TO TRANSACT BUSINESS AND WAS INCAPABLE OF SECURING TO HER ANY BENEFIT BY TESTAMENTARY DISPOSITION EVEN IF HE HAD WISHED TO DO SO. HER ONLY

CHANGE WAS THE MONEY FOR THE PROPERTY. THIS SHE SAW HER WAY TO SECURING WITH THE DOCTOR'S HELP, EVEN ALTHOUGH MY BROTHER SHOULD DIE legal validity." "You mean that they determined to carry out a fraud if necessary?" "PRECISELY. I MUST REMIND YOU THAT MY BROTHER KNEW NOTHING OF THIS. HE

BEFORE IT FELL DUE AND THE AUTHORITY SHE HELD SHOULD THEREBY LOSE ITS

WAS ALTOGETHER PAST LINDERSTANDING ANYTHING ABOUT IT. I MAY BE VERY brief now, but I am still anxious that you should fully understand. All that I'M SAYING TO YOU IS BEYOND QUESTION AND CAN BE PROVED AT ANY TIME by taking evidence on the spot; it is easily available."

Harry had sat down by now and was listening intently. "On the morning of the 22nd," Edge pursued in his level methodical

WAY. "THE COMTESSE WENT TO THE STATION ESCORTED BY DR MIGRATZ: THAT WAS HIS NAME—RATHER THAT IS HIS NAME. HE IS STILL ALIVE. ON THE WAY THEY MET THE BRITISH VICE-CONSUL. AND IN REPLY TO INQUIRIES FROM HIM SAID THAT MY BROTHER HAD HAD ANOTHER ATTACK BUT HAD RALLIED AGAIN. DR

MIGRATZ EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT HE WOULD LIVE ANOTHER TWO DAYS. WHILE MADAME VALFIER (THE VICE-CONSUL KNEW HER BY THAT NAME) WAS SANGUINE BYOUGH TO TALK OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A RECOVERY. SHE

IMPRESSED HIM VERY MUCH BY HER COURAGE AND HOPEFULNESS; SHE WAS, I MAY REMARK, A HANDSOME AND ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, LEAVING THE VICE-Consul. THEY REACHED THE STATION AND THERE PARTED. MIGRATZ RETURNED

IMMEDIATELY TO MY BROTHER'S HOUSE AND REMAINED THERE. THE CASE BEING DECLARED TO BE SO CRITICAL AS TO REQUIRE UNREWITTING ATTENTION. MADAME VALFIER—THE COMTESSE—TOOK THE TRAIN TO PETERSBURG.

BROTHER'S DEATH WAS ANNOUNCED. CERTIFIED BY MIGRATZ. AND DULY

REACHED IT THAT EVENING, PRESENTED THE AUTHORITY EARLY NEXT MORNING, AND WAS BACK ABOUT MIDNIGHT—THAT BBING THE 23RD. THE NEXT DAY MY

registered as the LAW of the PLACE REQUIRED." HE DREW A PAPER FROM

his pocket. "This is a copy of the entry, showing death on the 24th."

"THAT DOCUMENT IS VERY FAMILIAR TO ME. COLONEL EDGE. IT GIVES BOTH styles, doesn't it?"

"YES. BOTH STYLES. BUT-WELL, YOU SEE FOR YOURSELF. MY STORY IS DONE. WITH MIGRATZ'S CONNIVANCE—A WOMAN WHO ACTED AS NURSE WAS SOLIARED TOO. AND HER EVIDENCE IS AVAILABLE—THE ACTUAL DATE OF DEATH WAS CONCEALED. AND THE COMTESSE D'ALBREVILLE HAD TIME TO PRESENT HER ALITHORITY AND RECEIVE THE MONEY AFTER PAYING HER ACCOMPLICES their price, she left Russia with the bulk of it immediately." HARRY GLANCED AT NEELD: THE OLD MAN'S FACE WAS FULL OF EXCITEMENT AND HIS HAND TREMBLED AS IT LAY ON THE LEAVES OF JOSIAH CHOLDERTON'S Journal "My mother was married to my father on the 23rd," said Harry slowly. "My brother died on the 22nd." said Wilmot Edge. "He was dead. before the Comtesse started for Petersburg." Harry made no comment. He sat still and thoughtful. "OF COURSE I WAS PUT ON THE TRACK OF THE AFFAIR." EDGE PURSUED. "BY THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE MONEY. I HAD LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN GUESSING THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOMETHING QUEER, BUT WHAT IT WAS DID NOT CROSS MY MIND FOR A LONG WHILE. EVEN AFTER I HAD A CLEW, I FOUND MIGRATZ A TOUGH CUSTOMER. AND FOR A LONG TIME I TOTALLY FAILED TO IDENTIFY MADAME. VALFIER, WHEN, THANKS TO A SERIES OF CHANCES, I DID SO, IT WAS A SHOCK TO ME. SHE WAS THE WIFE OF A MAN OF HIGH POSITION AND HIGH REPUTATION. SHE HAD CONTRIVED—SHE WAS A REWARKABLE WOMAN—TO CARRY OUT THIS EXPEDITION OF HERS WITHOUT ROUSING ANY SUSPICION: SHE HAD RETURNED TO her husband and children. Finding herself in danger, she took the bold COURSE OF THROWING HERSELF ON MY MERCY. AND SENT FOR ME TO PARIS. IT WAS NOT MY DESIRE TO RAKE UP THE STORY. TO INJURE MY BROTHER'S MEMORY. OR TO BREAK UP THE WOMAN'S HOME. I POCKETED THE LOSS AS FAR AS I WAS

CONCERNED. AS FOR YOU, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE CONCERNED. I HAD NEVER
GONE INTO THE DETAILS; I ACCEPTED THE VIEW WHICH YOUR OWN CONDUCT,
AND LADY TRISTRAMS, SUGGESTED. I PROMISED SILENCE, GUARDING MYSELF
BY A PROVISO THAT I MUST SPEAK IF THE INTERESTS OF THIRD PERSONS WERE

EVER AFFECTED. YOUR INTERESTS ARE AFFECTED NOW, AND I HAVE SPOKEN, MR. Tristram—or Lord Tristram, as Lundoubtedly ought to say." HARRY TURNED TO MR NEED WITH A SMUE AND POINTED AT THE LEAVES OF THE Journal

"THERE WAS SOMETHING CHOLDERTON DIDN'T KNOW AFTER ALL." HE SAID. "A THRO DATE—NETHER THE 18TH NOR THE 24TH! TWENTY-FOUR HOURS! WILL, I

suppose it's enough!"

"It's enough to make all the difference to you." Said Neeld. "It makes THE ACTION YOU TOOK IN GIVING UP YOUR POSITION UNNECESSARY AND WRONG. It restores the state of things which existed—

"BEFORE YOU AND MINA ZABRISKA CAME TO BLENT—AND BROUGHT MR CHOLDERTON?" HE SAT SMLING A MOMENT. "FORGIVE ME: I'M VERY inhospitable." he said, and offered them cigarettes and whiskey. Neeld refused: the Colonel took both.

"You may imagine with what FEELINGS I HEARD YOUR STORY," Edge RESUMED. "AND FOUND THAT THE COMTESSE'S FRAUD WAS REALLY THE ENTIRE. BASIS OF YOUR ACTION. IF I HAD BEEN IN FINGLAND THE THING NEED NEVER have happened." "IT HAS HAPPENED." SAID HARRY. "AND-AND I DON'T QUITE KNOW WHERE WE ARE." FOR THE WORLD WAS ALL ALTERED AGAIN, JUST WHEN THE STRUGGLE OF THE

EVENING HAD SEEMED TO SETTLE IT. THE MEMORY OF THE GIRL IN THE restaurant flashed across his MIND. What would she-what would she say to this? COLONEL EDGE WAS EVIDENTLY RATHER A TALKATIVE MAN. HE BEGAN AGAIN. rather as though he were delivering a little set speech.

"It's Perhaps hardly to be expected," He said, "That any degree of INTIMACY SHOULD EXIST BETWEEN YOUR FAMILY AND MINE. LORD TRISTRAM. BUT I VENTURE TO HOPE THAT THE PART WHICH IT HAS BEEN MY PRIVILEGE TO PLAY TO-DAY MAY DO SOMETHING TO OBLITERATE THE MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

WE DON'T PERHAPS KNOW ALL THE RIGHTS OF IT. I AM LOYAL TO MY BROTHER, BUT

I KNEW THE LATE LADY TRISTRAM, AND I CAN APPRECIATE ALL THAT HER FRIBNDS

valued and prized in her."

"VERY GOOD, EDGE, VERY GOOD," MURMURED EMOTIONAL OLD MR NELD.

"Very proper, most proper."

"I'M VERY MUCH IN YOUR DEBT, AND I'M SINCERELY GRATEFUL, COLONEL EDGE.
As for the past—There are graves; let it lie in them."

"THANK YOU. LORD TRISTRAM, THANK YOU." AND THE COLONEL GAVE HARRY HIS.

"And I hope that old guarrels need not be eternal?"

hand. "Excellent, excellent!" muttered Mr Neeld as he folded up the leaves

"Excellent, excellent!" Muttered Mr. Neeld as he folded up the leaves of Josiah Cholderton's diary.

"You can call on me for proops whenever you wish to proceed. After

what has occurred, I presume they will be necessary."
"Yes, yes—for his seat," assented Neeld.
"And to satisfy public opinion," added Edge.

There was a pause. Neeld broke it by saying timidly:

"AND—ER—THERE IS, OF COURSE, THE—THE LADY. THE LADY WHO NOW HOLDS the title and estates."

"OF COURSE!" AGREED EDGE, WITH A NOD THAT APOLOGIZED FOR forgetfulness.

OF COURSE THERE WAS! HARRY SMLED. HE HAD BEEN WONDERING HOW LOT

OF COURSE THERE WAS! HARRY SMLED. HE HAD BEEN WONDERING HOW LONG
THEY WOULD TAKE TO THINK OF THE LADY WHO NOW HELD THE TITLE AND ESTATES.

THEY WOULD LAKE TO THINK OF THE LAST WHO HOW HELD THE TITLE AND ESTATES.

WELL, THEY HAD COME TO HER AT LAST—AFTER PROVIDING FOR THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE DEWANDS OF PUBLIC

course, there was the lady too. THOUGH HE SMILED. HE WAS VEXED AND SUFFERED A VAGUE DISAPPOINTMENT. IT IS TO BE WISHED THAT THINGS WOULD HAPPEN IN A MANNER HARMONIOUS WITH THEIR TRUE NATURE—THE TRACK TRACKCALLY. THE COMIC SO THAT LAUGHTER ROARS OUT. THE MELODRAMATIC WITH THE PROPER LIMELIGHT EFFECTS. TO DO THE TRISTRAMS JUSTICE, THIS WAS GENERALLY ACHEVED WHERE THEY WERE CONCERNED: HARRY COULD HAVE RELIED ON HIS MOTHER AND ON CECILY: HE COULD RELY ON HIMSELF IF HE WERE GIVEN A SUITABLE ENVIRONMENT. ONE THAT APPEALED TO HIM AND AFFORDED RESPONSIVE FEELINGS. THE FAMILY WAS NOT IN THE HABIT OF WASTING ITS OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMOTION. BUT WHO COULD BE EMOTIONAL NOW-IN FACE OF THESE TWO FIDERLY GENTLEMEN? NEELD'S EXAMPLE MADE SUCH A THING RIDICULOUS. COLONEL EDGE WOULD OBVIOUSLY CONSIDER IT UNSOLDIER-LIKE. THE CHANCE HAD BEEN FRITTERED AWAY: LIFE WAS AT ITS OLD GAME OF NEGLECTING ITS OWN POSSIBILITIES. THERE WAS NOTHING BUT TO ACQUIESCE. FINE MELODRAMA HAD BEEN DEGRADED INTO A BUSINESS INTERVIEW WITH

OPINION-AFTER SATISFYING THE GIRL IN THE RESTAURANT, IN FACT. YES. OF

TWO ELDERLY AND CONSCIENTIOUS GENTLEMEN. THE SCENE IN THE LONG GALLERY HAD AT LEAST BEEN DIFFERENT FROM THIS! HARRY BOWED HIS HEAD: HE MUST BE THANKFUL FOR SWALL BLESSINGS; IT WAS SOMETHING THAT THEY had remembered the lady at last. At a glance from Edge, Neeld rose to go. "Pray wait—wait a minute or two," begged Harry. "I want to think for a minute."

Neeld sat down again. It is very likely they were as surprised at him as HE WAS CHILDISHLY VEXED WITH THEM. FOR HE EXHIBITED PERFECT CALM. YET perhaps Colonel Edge, who had given so colorless an account of the Comtesse's wild appeal to him, was well suited. "I'M GOING DOWN TO IVER'S TO-MORROW." SAID OLD NEELD. TUCKING THE

extract from the Journal into his pocket.

MANOR MRE HAD MADE THERE TOO. HE COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO KNOW ALL THE DIFFERENCE IT HAD MADE TO HARRY'S LIFE. EVEN TO THE MAN HIMSELF. TWO IRRESPONSIBLE LADIES—SAY ADDIE AND—WELL. MADAME VALFIER may indeed make differences. "YES, TO FAIRHOLME." CONTINUED OLD NEELD. "WE-WE MAY SEE YOU

"TO MER'S?" AFTER A MOMENT'S SILENCE HARRY FAIRLY LAUGHED. EDGE WAS SURPRISED NOT UNDERSTANDING WHAT A DIFFERENCE THE COMTESSE'S

EDGE LOOKED UP WITH AN INTERESTED GLANCE. IT HAD OCCURRED TO HIM THAT he was turning somebody out as well as putting somebody in.

there now?"

"You'll have, of course, to communicate what I have said to—to——?

"Oh. we'll say Lady Tristram still." Harry interrupted. EDGE GAVE A LITTLE BOW. "I SHALL BE READY TO MEET HER OR HER ADVISERS AT

ANY TIME," HE REMARKED. "SHE WILL. I HOPE. RECOGNIZE THAT NO OTHER COURSE WAS OPEN TO ME. SHE MUST NOT THINK THAT THERE IS ANY ROOM FOR doubt."

Harry's brain was at work now; he saw himself going to Blent, going to tell Cecily.

"Possibly." Mr Neeld suggested. "It would be better to intrust a thro-PERSON WITH THE TASK OF GIVING HER THIS NEWS? ONE OF HER OWN SEX PERHAPS?" HE SEEMED TO CONTEMPLATE A POSSIBLE FAINTING-FIT, AND, REMEMBERING HIS NOVELS. THE NECESSITY OF CUTTING STAY-LACES. A TASK

better left to women "YOU'RE THINKING OF MINA? OF MINA ZABRISKA?" ASKED HARRY, LAUGHING.

THERE AGAIN, WHAT A LOSS! WHY HAD NOT MINA HEARD IT AT FIRST HAND?

She would have known how to treat the thing.

"SHE'S ALWAYS TAKEN A GREAT INTEREST IN THE MATTER, AND-AND I

Neeld "We shall have to make up our minds what to call ourselves soon." sighed Harry. "THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT AT ALL." EDGE PUT IN: "AND IF I MAY VENTURE TO

UNDERSTAND IS VERY FRIENDLY WITH-WITH MISS GAINSBOROUGH." SAID

SUGGEST. I SHOULD SAY THAT THE SOONER THE NECESSITY IS FACED THE hetter"

"CERTAINLY, CERTAINLY," HARRY ASSENTED ABSENTLY, EVEN THE GIRL IN THE RESTAURANT MUST KNOW ABOUT IT SOON: THERE MUST BE ANOTHER POW-WOWING IN ALL THE PAPERS SOON, BUT WHAT WOULD CECILY SAY? "IF EVER THE

time comes---." He had laughed at that: It had sounded so unlikely. SO UNREAL, SO THEATRICAL, "IF EVER THE TIME COMES, I SHALL REMEMBER." THAT WAS A STRANGE THING TO LOOK BACK TO NOW, BUT IT WAS ALL STRANGE— THE AFFAIR OF THE BEASTLY NEW VISCOUNTY. BLINKHAMPTON AND ITS BUILDINGS.

THE ARBITRATION AND THE CONFIDENCE OF MR DISNEY, MADAME VALFIER-

CONTESSE D'ALBREVILLE-WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM ADDIE TRISTRAM HAD BROUGHT ALL THESE THINGS ABOUT. THE RESULT OF HARRY'S REVIEW OF THEM was English enough to satisfy Wilmot Edge himself.

"The whole thing makes me look rather an ass. I think," said he. "No doubt you acted impulsively," Edge allowed. It was fully equivalent

to an assent. "GOOD HEAVENS. I'D BEEN BROUGHT UP TO IT! IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE FACT. OF MY LIFE" HE MADE NO PRETENCES ABOUT THE MATTER NOW. "IT NEVER

OCCURRED TO ME TO THINK OF ANY MISTAKE. THAT CERTIFICATE"-IT LAY ON THE

TABLE STILL—"WAS THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES." HE LAUGHED AS HE SPOKE THE HACKNEYED OLD PHRASE. "AND DAMOCLES KNEW THE SWORD WAS there, or there'd have been no point in it."

THE TWO HAD RATHER LOST TRACK OF HIS MOOD. THEY LOOKED AT ONE ANOTHER

again.

"You've a lot to think of. We'll leave you," said the Colonel.
"But—But what am I to DO?" OLD NEED'S VOCE WAS ALMOST A BLEAT IN

"THE COMMUNICATION SHOULD COME FROM AN AUTHORITATIVE QUARTER,"

Edge advised.

his despair, "Am I to tell people at Blentmouth?"

"It'S BOUND TO BE A BLOW TO HER," SAID NEELD. "SUDDENLY LIFTED UP, suddenly thrown down! Poor girl!"

"Justice is the First thing," DECLARED WILMOT Edge. Now he might have been on a court-martial.

They knew nothing whatever of the truth or the true position.

"WE MAY RELY ON—ON LORD TRISTRAM—TO TREAT THE MATTER WITH EVERY

"I'm sure of it. Neeld. I'm sure of it."

delicacy, Edge,"

himself."

"HE HAS BEEN THROUGH WHAT IS PRACTICALLY THE SAME EXPERIENCE

"A VERY REMARKABLE CASE, VERY REMARKABLE. THE STATE OF THE LAW WHICH

makes such a thing possible——"

"AH. THERE I DON'T AGREE EDGE. THERE MAY BE HARDSHIPS ON

individuals, but in the interests of morality——"

"You must occasionally put up with damned absurbity," Harry

INTERPREPTED RATHER ROUGHLY. "I BEG YOUR PARDON, MR NEELD. I—I'M A BIT worried over this."

THEY SAT SILENT THEN, WATCHING HIM FOR A FEW MOMENTS. HE STOOD

LEANING HS ARM ON THE MANTEL-PIECE, HS BROWS KNIT BUT A SMILE LINGERING ON HS LIPS. HE WAS SEEING THE SCENE AGAIN, THE SCENE IN WIRE STRANGERS NOW. THE SCENE WOULD LEAVE THEM STRANGERS STILL STILL MINA ZABRISKA WOULD BE LEFT TO CRY. "YOU TRISTRAMS!" GIVEN THAT THEY WERE TRISTRAMS. NO OTHER RESULT WAS POSSIBLE. THEY HAD BEEN THROUGH WHAT MR. NEED CALLED PRACTICALLY THE SAME EXPERIENCE ALREADY: IN THAT

WHICH HE WAS TO TELL CECLY. HE KNEW WHAT THE END OF IT WOULD BE

very room it had happened.

CONSIDERATION TO THE NEW THING. THEN HE RAISED HIS HEAD AND SPOKE TO Wilmot Edge. "THERE ARE A GOOD MANY COMPLICATIONS IN THIS MATTER, COLONEL EDGE. I'VE HAD MY LIFE UPSET ONCE BEFORE, AND I ASSURE YOU IT'S RATHER TROUBLESOME WORK. IT WANTS A LITTLE TIME AND A LITTLE THINKING. YOU GET

SUDDENLY THE TWO MEN SAW A LIGHT BORN IN HARRY'S EYES: HIS BROW GREW SMOOTH THE SMILE ON HIS LIPS WIDER. HE GAVE A MOMENT'S MORE

RATHER CONFUSED—ALWAYS CHANGING YOUR TRAIN, YOU KNOW, I HAVE WORK ON HAND-PLANS AND SO FORTH. AND, AS YOU SAY, OF COURSE THERE'S THE lady too." He laughed as he ended by borrowing Neeld's phrase. "I can understand all that, Lord Tristram."

everybody for the present? It won't be for long: a week perhaps." "YOU MEAN, KEEP THE CHANGE IN THE POSITION A SECRET?" EDGE SEEMED. rather startled.

"DO YOU MIND SAYING MR. TRISTRAM? SAYING MR. TRISTRAM TO ME AND TO

"YOU'VE KEPT THE SECRET FOR MANY YEARS, COLONEL, SHALL WE SAY A WEEK MORE? AND YOU TOO, MR. NEELD? NOTHING AT ALL TO THE PEOPLE AT BLENTMOUTH? SHALL WE KEEP MISS S. IN THE DARK FOR A WEEK MORE?" The thought of Miss Swinkerton carried obvious amusement with it.

"YOU MEAN TO CHOOSE YOUR OPPORTUNITY WITH-WITH YOUR COUSIN?" NEELD

asked.

"YES. EXACTLY—TO CHOOSE MY OPPORTUNITY. YOU SEE THE DIFFICULT

TO SUCH COMPLICATIONS," HE COMPLAINED. HE WAS THINKING, NO DOUBT, OF the Iver engagement and the predicament in which it had landed him.
"I don't ask it on my own account. There's my cousin."
"Yes, yes, Neeld, there's the lady too."

character of the situation? I ask your absolute silence for a week."

"REALLY !----" OLD NEED HESTATED A LITTLE. "THESE CONCEALMENTS LEAD.

"Yes, yes, Neeld, there's the lady too."
"WELL, EDGE, IF YOU'RE SATISHED, I CAN'T STAND OUT. FOR A WEEK THEN—
silence."

"Absolute!" said Harry. "Without a look or a word?"
"You have my promise," said Wilmot Edge.
"AND MNE. BUT—BUT I SHALL FEEL VERY AWKWARD," SIGHED FOOR MR NEELD.

HE MICHIT HAVE ADDED THAT HE DID FEEL A SUDDEN AND POIGNANT PANG OF DISAPPOINTMENT. LIVED THERE THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT HAVE LIKED TO CARRY THAT BIT OF NEWS IN HIS PORTMANTEAU WHEN HE WENT OUT OF TOWN? AT least that man was not Mr Jenkinson Neeld.

"I'll choose my time, and I won't keep you long," said Harry.

"I'll choose my time, and I won't keep you long," said Harry.

With that they left him. But they had a word together before Edge caught his 'bus in Piccadilly.

"Cool young chap!" said he. "Took it quietly enough."

"YES, CONSIDERING THE ENORWOUS DIFFERENCE IT MAKES," AGREED NEELD. HIS USE OF THAT PARTICULAR PHRASE WAS PERHAPS AN UNCONSCIOUS REMINISCENCE OF THE WORDS IN THE JOURNAL, THE WORDS THAT ADDIE USED

when she burst into Madame de Kries's room at Heidelberg.

Edge chuckled a little. "Not much put out about the girl either, eh?"

Edge chuckled a little. "Not much put out about the girl either, eh?"
"Now you say so ——" Neeld shook his head. "I hope he'll do it

tactfully," he sighed.
EDGE DID NOT SEEM TO CONSIDER THAT LIKELY. HE IN HIS TURN SHOOK HIS head.
"I SAID NO MORE THAN I THOUGHT ABOUT ADDIE TRSTRAM," HE REWARKED. "But the fact is, they're a rum lot, and there's no getting over it, Neeld."
"They—er—have their peculiarities, no doubt," admitted Mr. Neeld.

XXVI

A Business Call

"MY DEAR, ISN'T THERE SOMETHING ODD ABOUT MR NEELD?" MRS IVER PUT THE question, her anxious charity struggling with a natural inquisitiveness.

"ABOUT NEELD? I DON'T KNOW. IS THERE?" HE DID NOT SO MUCH AS LOOK UP from his paper. "He's coming with us to Blent to-night, I suppose?"

"YES. AND HE SEEMS QUITE EXCITED ABOUT THAT. AND HE WAS POSITIVELY RUDE TO MISS SWINKERTON AT LUNCH, WHEN SHE TOLD HIM THAT LADY TRISTRAM MEANT TO GIVE A BALL NEXT WINTER. I EXPECT HIS NERVES ARE OUT OF ORDER!"

SMALL WONDER IF THEY WERE, SURELY! LET US SUPPOSE GUY FAWKES'S SCHEWE NOT PREMATURELY DISCOVERED, AND ONE MEMBER OF A FULL HOUSE PROVY TO IT AND AWAITING THE RESULT. THAT MEMBER'S POSITION WOULD BE VERY LIKE MR NEELD'S. WOULD HE LISTEN TO THE DEBATE WITH ATTENTION? Could he answer questions with sedulous courtesy?

FROM THE MOMENT OF HIS ARRIVAL MR NEELD HAD BEEN PLUNGED INTO THE TRISTRAM AFFAIR, AND SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE WHO WERE CONNECTED WITH IT.

BUT IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT HE HAD IT ON HIS BRAIN AND SAW IT EVERYWHERE. FOR TO-DAY IT WAS NOT THE LEADING TOPIC OF THE NEG-BOORHOOD, AND MISS S.'S OBSERVATION HAD BEEN ONLY BY THE WAY.

THE BUGAGEMENT WAS THE TOPIC, AND ONLY NEELD (OR PERHAPS MINA ZABRISKA TOO, AT BLENT), INSISTED ON DIGGING UP A HYPOTHETICAL PAST AND REPEATING, IN RETROSPECTIVE RUMINATION, THAT THARRY TRISTRAM MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE LUCKY MAN. AS FOR SUCH AN IDEA. —WELL, MISS S. HAPPENED TO KNOW THAT THERE HAD NEVER BEEN ANYTHING IN IT. JANIE WER HERSELF HAD

HE HAD MET GAINSBOROUGH ESSAYING A FURTIVE BYITRY INTO BLENTMOUTH AND HEADING TOWARD THE CURIOSITY-SHOP—WITH A GOOD EXCUSE THIS TIME. It was Cecily's birthday, and the occasion, which was to be celebrated BY A DINNER-PARTY, MUST BE MARKED BY A PRESENT ALSO. NEELD WENT WITH THE LITTLE GENTLEWAN. AND THEY BOUGHT A BIT OF OLD CHELSEA (WHICH

TOLD HER SO, SHE SAID. THE QUESTION BETWEEN JANIE AND MISS S., WHICH this assertion raises, may be passed by without discussion.

Mrs Trumbler coming up High Street and Miss S. coming down it. He doubled up a side street to the churchyard, Neeld pursuing him at a more leisurely pace.

"It'S POSITIVELY WORTHY OF A PLACE AT BLENT—IN THE LONG GALLERY." PANTED

LOOKED VERY YOUNG FOR ITS AGE). COMING OUT. GAINSBOROUGH SIGHTED

GAINSBOROUGH, HUGGING HIS BROWN-PAPER-COVERED FRIZE. "YOU'LL BE INTERESTED TO SEE THE CHANGES WE'RE MAKING, MR NEELD. CECILY HAS BEGUN TO TAKE AN ENORMOUS INTEREST IN THE HOUSE, AND I—I'M SETTLING down."

"You don't regret London ever?"
"I shall run up now and then. My duty is to my dauchter. Of course her LIFE is Changed." He sighed as he added, "We're getting guite used to that."

"She has come to love the place, I dare say?"

"Yes, Yes. She's in very cood shrits and quite happy in her position
NOW. I THINK." He GLANCED OVER HIS SHOULDER. MISS S. WAS IN SIGHT.

NOW, I THINK." HE GLANCED OVER HIS SHOULDER MISS S. WAS IN SIGHT.
"GOOD-BY. SO GLAD WE SHALL SEE YOU TO-NIGHT." HE MADE HIS ESCAPE AT
A RUN. NEELD. HAVING BEEN INTERPOCATED AT LUNCH ALREADY. WAS ALLOWED

to pass by with a lift of his hat.

JANIE WAS VERY HAPPY. SHE AT LEAST THOUGHT NO MORE OF THAT BYGONE EPISODE. SHE ASKED NO CUESTIONS ABOUT HARRY TRISTRAM. HE HAD

EPISODE. SHE ASKED NO QUESTIONS ABOUT HARRY IRISTRAM. HE HAD
DROPPED OUT OF HER LIFE. HE SEEMED TO HAVE DROPPED OUT OF THE LIFE OF

NEELD CAME FIRST TO FAIRHOLME, IT WAS STRANGER STILL IN VIEW OF WHAT MUST SOON BE. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ENGAGEMENT SEEMED TO ASSUME TO WRITE. FINIS TO HARRY AS A FACTOR IN BLENTMOUTH SCOETY. IN THAT POINT OF VIEW THE MOMENT CHOSEN FOR IT WAS PULL OF AN UNCONSCIOUS IRONY. JANE WOULD NOT HAVE GONE BACK TO HIM NOW, AND NEELD DID NOT SUSPECT HER OF ANY FEELING WHICH COLLD HAVE MADE THAT POSSIBLE. IT WAS MERELY COD THAT SHE SHOULD BE PUTTING AN APPROPRIATE FINISH TO A THING WHICH IN THE MEANTIME HAD BEEN SUDDENLY, ABSOLUTELY, AND RADICALLY UNDONE. NEELD WAS LOYAL TO HIS WORD; BUT NONE MAY KNOW THE TERRIBLE TEMPTATION HE SUFFERED; A NOD, A WINK, A HINT, AN AMBIGUITY—anything would have given him some relief.

HARRY WAS MENTIONED ONLY ONCE—IN CONNECTION WITH HIS LETTER TO IVER about the Arbitration. Iver was not inclined to let him go.

"HE HAS GREAT BUSINESS ABILITY. It'S A RITY TO WASTE HIS TIME. HE CAN make money, Neeld."

THE COUNTRYSIDE TOO. THAT WAS STRANCE ANYHOW, WHEN IT WAS

"If he stays in, yes. But this thing won't be popular."

Neeld could maintain no interest in the conversation. It had to proceed

"Disney's a good friend to have," Neeld suggested.

ALL ALONG ON A BASELESS PRESUMPTION, TO DEAL WITH A STATE OF THINGS WHICH DID NOT EXIST. WHAT MIGHT BE WISE FOR HARRY—HARRY NOTHING-AT-all—might be unwise for Tristram of Blent, and conversely.

"I MUST LEAVE IT TO HIM," I VER CONCLUDED. "BUT I SHALL TELL HIM THAT I HOPE
HE WON'T GO. HE'S GOT HIS WAY IN THE WORLD TO MAKE FIRST. HE CAN TRY

HE WON'T GO. HE'S GOT HS WAY IN THE WORLD TO MAKE FIRST. HE CAN TRY politics later on, if he likes."

"NO DOUBT YOU'RE RIGHT," MURMURED OLD NEELD, BOTH UNEASY AND UNINTERESTED. HE WAS FEELING SOME THING OF WHAT HE HAD EXPERIENCED

ONCE BEFORE, HE KNEW THE TRUTH AND HE HAD TO KEEP HIS FRIEND IN THE

unsympathetic, and with her usual candor she told him so.

"YOU DON'T REALLY APPRECIATE BOB," SAID SHE. "NOBODY QUITE KNOWS HIM
EXCEPT ME. I DIDN'T USE TO, BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT A STRONG CHARACTER HE

has."

UNWONTEDLY CYNCAL THOUGHTS ROSE IN OLD MR NEELD. HAD HE COME DOWN
TO FAIRHOLME TO LISTEN TO THE PLATITUDES OF VIRTUOUS LOVE? INDEED HE HAD.

COME FOR NO SUCH THING. ALL YOUNG MEN HAVE STRONG CHARACTERS WHILE

DARK. IN THOSE EARLIER DAYS HE HAD ONE CONFIDANT, ONE ACCOMPLICE, IN Mina Zabriska. The heavy secret was all his own to carry now.

AS A CONSECUENCE OF HIS PRECOCLEPTION, JANE IVER FOLIND HIM BATHER.

they are engaged.

"And it's such a comfort to have a man one can lean upon," Jane
Pursued, Locking, however, admirably capable of standing without

extraneous support.

THERE IT WAS AGAIN! SHE'D BE CALLING HIM HER "MASTER" NEXT—AS THE
HEROINE DOES IN THE THRO ACT. TO UNFALING APPLAUSE. WHAT WAS ALL THIS

to ears that listened for a whisper of Harry Tristram?

"THE MOST DELICHTFUL THING IS," JANE PURSUED, "THAT OUR MARRIAGE IS TO MAKE NO CHANGE AT ALL IN HIS WAY OF LIFE. WE'RE GOING TO LIVE AT

MAKE NO CHANGE AT ALL IN HIS WAY OF LIFE. WE'RE GOING TO LIVE AT MINGHAM JUST AS HE HAS LIVED ALL HIS LIFE—AA REAL COUNTRY LIFE ON A FARM!" THERE WAS NO HINT THAT OTHER IDEALS OF EXISTENCE HAD EVER POSSESSED AN ALLURING CHARM; THE HIGH LIFE WITH HARRY, THE BROAD AND COSMOPOLITAN LIFE WITH THE MAJOR—WHERE WERE THEY? "I'VE INSISTED ON IT, THE ONE THING I'VE HAD MY OWN WAY IN."

BOB WAS BEING TRANSMOGRIFIED INTO A MAN OF IRON, IF NOT OF BLOOD.

Vainly Mr Neeld consulted his memories.

"AND MINCHAMS SO BOUND UP WITH IT ALL. I USED TO GO THERE WITH MINA ZABRISKA." SHE SMLED IN RETROSPECT: IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PARDONABLE F "BOB ISN'T PARTICULARLY FOND OF HER, YOU SEE, SO WE DON'T MEET MUCH now. He thinks she's rather spiteful."
"NOT AT ALL," SAID NEELD, ALMOST SHARPLY. "SHE'S A VERY INTELLIGENT WOMAN."

NEELD HAD SMLED TOO. "I HAVEN'T SEEN HER FOR EVER SO LONG." JANIE

added. "but she'll be at Blent to-night."

Ah, if he might give just the barest hint to Mina now!

"OH YES, INTELLIGENT!" SHE SAID NO MORE. IF PEOPLE DID NOT AGREE WITH BOB—well, there it was.

BOB BOBE HIS IDEALIZATION VERY WILL. IT WAS EASY TO FORESEE A HAPPY

AND A REMARKABLY EQUABLE MARRIED LIFE. BUT THE WHOLE THING HAD NO FLAVOR FOR MR NEELD'S PALATE, SPOILT BY THE SPICES OF TRISTRAM VAGARIES.

A DECENT SHOW OF FRIENDLINESS WAS ALL HE COULD MUSTER. IT WAS ALL THAT WER HIMSELF SEEVED TO EXPECT; HE WAS RESIGNED BUT BY NO MEANS exultant.

"THE GIRL'S VERY HAPPY, AND THAT'S THE THING. FOR MYSELF—WELL, I'VE GOT MOST OF THE THINGS I STARTED TO GET, AND IF THIS ISN'T QUITE WHAT I LOOKED forward to—Well, you remember how things fell out?"

Neeld nodded. He remembered that very well.

"And, as I say, it's all very satisfactory." He shrugged his shoulders and relighted his ogar. He was decidedly a reasonable man, thought Neeld.

THE EVENING CAME—NEELD HAD BEEN IMPATIENT FOR IT—AND THEY DROVE over to Blent, where Bob was to meet them.

"It's A FINE PLACE FOR A GIFL TO HAVE," SAID IVER, STIRRED TO A SUDDEN SENSE of the beauty of the old house as it came into view.

fashion. But still Harry was not mentioned. "AND IF THEY HAD A BUSINESS MAN—WITH HIS HEAD ON HIS SHOULDERS—TO MANAGE THE ESTATE. IT'D BE WORTH HALF AS MUCH AGAIN." THIS TIME IT WAS IVER WHO SIGHED: THE IDEA OF ANYTHING NOT HAVING ALL THE MONEY MADE out of it that could be made offended his instincts. "She'll have a husband, dear," his wife reminded him.

THEY WERE ALL SILENT FOR A MOMENT, SUCH A PLACE TO HAVE, SUCH A PLACE TO LOSE! NEED HEARD MRS IVER SIGHING IN HER GOOD-NATURED MOTHERLY

starting a subject of real interest in lieu of continuing idle talk. THE EVENING WAS HOT AND THE HALL-DOOR OF BLENT STOOD OPEN. CECLY WAS SITTING IN THE HALL. AND CAME OUT TO GREET THEM. SHE SEEMED TO

"I WONDER IF BOB'LL GET THERE BEFORE WE DO," SAID JANIE, WITH THE AIR OF

NEED TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE AS SHE STOOD THERE IN HER YOUNG FAIRNESS, GRACIOUSLY WELCOMING HER GUESTS, SHE WAS PALE, BUT WORE A GAY AIR AND DID THE HONORS WITH NATURAL DIGNITY. NO SIGN OF STRANGENESS to the place, and no embarrassment, were visible. "OH, MY DEAR, HOW YOU REMIND ME OF LADY TRISTRAM!" GOOD MRS IVER

NEELD PRESSED THE GIRL'S HAND WITH A GRIP THAT SHE NOTICED: SHE LOOKED at him in a sort of question and for a moment flushed a little. "It's very kind of you to come." she said to him softly.

broke out.

"Er-no-none."

"How are you. Mr Neeld?" The Imp had suddenly darted out from

SOMEWHERE AND WAS OFFERING HER HAND. "I'M STAYING HERE, YOU KNOW." AND IN A WHISPER SHE ADDED. "THAT YOUNG MAN OF JANIE'S HAS BEEN

HERE A QUARTER OF AN HOUR, AND CECILY WASN'T DRESSED, AND I'VE HAD TO

TALK TO HIM. OH, DEAR!" SHE HAD HER HAND ON HIS ARM AND DREW HIM apart, "Any news of Harry Tristram?" she whispered.

"Just casually, Madame Zabriska." She turned away with a peevish little pout. "Then you're not very

Her quick eyes looked at him in suspicion; he had hesitated a little.

"You've seen him?" she asked.

Cecily's place was under it.

INTERESTING," SHE SEEMED TO SAY. BUT NEELD FORGAVE HER SHE HAD ASKED HIM ABOUT HARRY. HE COULD FORGIVE MORE EASILY BECAUSE HE HAD deluded her.

ADDIE TRISTRAM'S PICTURE WAS AT ONE FND OF THE DINING-ROOM NOW, AND

"My first dinner-party! Altihough it's a swall one," she said to liver as she sat down.
"Your first at Blent?"

"The First anywhere—actually!" She Laughed, and then grew thoughtful for a moment, glanging out into the dark and listening to the Flap of a bat's wing against the window.

"You'll have flenty now," said he, as he watched her admiringly. He forgot, man that he was, that girls do not find permanent happiness in

dinner-parties.
It was evident that Neeld ought never to have come to Blent that evening. For the talk was of futures, and, out of deference to the

YOUNG HOSTESS, EVEN MORE OF HERS THAN OF THE BNGAGED COUPLE'S.
Theirs indeed was not provocative of discussion; if satisfactory, it was
ALSO OBVIOUS. CECLY'S OPENED MORE TORICS, AND SHE HERSELF WAS
WILLING AND SHEWED EVEN FAGER TO DISCUSS IT. SHE FELL IN WITH MISS IVER'S

SUGGESTION THAT SHE OUGHT TO BE A CENTRE OF GOOD WORKS IN THE DISTRICT,
AND IN PURSUANCE OF THIS IDEA SHOULD ACCEPT THE POSITION OF PATRON TO
MISS SWINKERTON'S COMPLICATED SCHEME OF BENEVOLENCE. SHE AGREED

WITH IVER THAT THE AFFAIRS OF THE ESTATE PROBABLY WANTED OVERHALLING. AND THAT A CAPABLE MAN SHOULD BE ENGAGED FOR THE TASK. EVEN AT SOME EXPENSE. SHE PROFESSED HERSELF READY TO COOPERATE WITH BOB IN PROTECTING THE FISHING OF THE BLENT, SHE WAS, IN A WORD, VERY MUCH THE PROPRIETOR IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR NEED TO SIT AND HEAR ALL THIS AND OPPOSITE TO HIM SAT MINA ZABRISKA. RATHER SILENT AND DEMURE. BUT LOSING NO CHANCE OF REMINDING HIM BY A STEALTHY GLANCE THAT THIS ORDINARY TALK COVERED A REWARKABLE SITUATION—AS INDEED IT DID. BUT NOT OF THE PRECISE NATURE THAT MINA SUPPOSED. NEELD FELT AS THOUGH HE WERE BEHIND THE SCENES OF FATE'S THEATRE. AND HE DID NOT FIND THE PLACE COMFORTABLE. HE SAW THE NEXT TABLEAU IN PREPARATION AND HAD TO ASK HIMSELE WHAT ITS EFFECT WOULD BE ON AN UNSUSPECTING ALDIENCE. HE CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT FOREKNOW! FDGE WAS AN ATTRIBUTE NOT LIKELY TO MAKE HUMAN BEINGS HAPPY: IT COULD NOT EASILY MAKE TERMS WITH sympathy. WHEN DESSERT WAS ON THE TABLE. IVER, TRUE TO HIS HABITS AND TRADITIONS. FELT THAT IT WAS THE OCCASION FOR A FEW FRIENDLY INFORMAL WORDS: THE BIRTHDAY AND THE MAJORITY OF YOUNG LADY TRISTRAM DEMANDED SO MUCH RECOGNITION ADMIRABLY CONCISE AND SIMPLE IN ORDINARY CONVERSATION. HE BECAME. LIKE SO MANY OF HIS COUNTRYMEN. RATHER HEAVY AND POMPOUS WHEN HE GOT ON HIS LEGS. YET HE MADE WHAT EVERYBODY EXCEPT MINA ZABRISKA CONSIDERED A VERY APPROPRIATE LITTLE SPEECH. GAINSBOROUGH GREW QUITE ENTHUSIASTIC OVER IT: AND NEELD THOUGHT IT WAS WONDERFULLY GOOD (IF IT HAD NOT HAPPENED, OF COURSE, TO BE BY FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES AN ABSURDITY FROM BEGINNING TO END). CECILY WAS CONTENT TO SAY. "THANK YOU." BUT HER FATHER COULD NOT REFUSE HIMSELF THE PRIVILEGE OF REPLY: THE REPLY WAS ON HER BEHALF. BUT IT WAS MAINLY ABOUT HIMSELF-ALSO A NOT UNCOMMON CHARACTERISTIC OF AFTER-DINNER ORATORY. HOWEVER HE AGREED WITH IVER THAT EVERYTHING WAS FOR THE BEST, AND THAT THEY WERE ENTITLED TO CONGRATULATE THEIR HOSTESS AND THEMSELVES ON THINGS AT LARGE. THEN NEELD HAD A TURN OVER THE ENGAGEMENT (A SUBJECT DULL BUT SAFE!) AND THE PROCEEDINGS WERE STOPPED ONLY BY BOB BROADLEY'S HEADLONG FLIGHT WHEN THE QUESTION OF

"HARRY TRISTRAM IS QUITE WELL AND IN VERY GOOD SPIRITS. I NEVER SAW A man better in my life."

MINA WAS SLENT FOR A MOMENT. THEN SHE BROKE OUT: "I CALL IT DISCUSTING. HE'S IN GOOD SPIRITS, AND—AND THERE'S AN end of it, I suppose! The next thing will be——"

"It's not the end if there's a next thing," Neeld suggested timidly.

"OH, DON'T BE TRESOME. THE NEXT THING'LL BE SOME STUPID GIRL FOR HIM AND SOME IDOT OF A MAN FOR HER. HOW I WISH I'D NEVER COME TO

"THANK GOODNESS, THAT'S OVER!" SAID MINA SNAFFISHLY, AS SHE STEPPED OUT INTO THE GARDEN, FOLLOWED BY MR NEELD. THE REST WENT OFF TO SEE THE TREASURES OF THE LONG GALLERY MINA TURNED TO HIM WITH A CUICK

question: "You saw Mr Tristram, how is he?"

his response arose.

Merrion!"

vou so much."

"Let her!" said the Impungraciously. "I've put myself out enough about the Tristrams."

Neeld foreone to remind her of the entirely voluntary nature of her sacrifices: After all he was not the man to throw stones on that

"What a Pity! Miss Gainsborough—Lady Tristram, I Mean—will Miss

"Don't despair; things may turn out better than you think."
"They can't." she declared fretfully. "I shall go away."

account.
"Wait a few days anyhow," he urced her. In a few days something must happen.

"A FEW DAYS? OH, YES!" AS A MATTER OF FACT SHE MEANT TO STAY ALL THE

TOWARD THE LONG GALLERY, "FUITING ALL THE THINGS IN DIFFERENT PLACES AND rearranging everything."

"I should imagine that Mr Gainsborough's enjoying himself then?"

WINTER. "SHE'S STARTED." SHE WENT ON. WITH AN IRRITATED JERK OF HER HEAD

"She doesn't let him touch a thing," replied Mina with a fleeting smile.
"He just stands about with a duster. That contents him well encuch, though, Oh, yes, I shall go, The Broadleys won't care about me, and

Cecily won't want me long."

NELD COULD GIVE REAL COMFORT ONLY AT THE PRICE OF INDISCRETION.

MOREOVER HE WAS NOT AT ALL SURE THAT A DISCLOSURE OF THE TRUTH WOULD

Moreover He was not at all sure that a disclosure of the truth would bring any comport, for Mina wanted to be on both sides and to harmonize devotion to Ceolly with zeal for Harry. Neeld did not quite see how this was to be done, since it was understood that as Harry would take nothing from Ceolly, so Ceolly would refuse anything from Harry.

"We must wait and see how it all turns out," said he.

"I hate people who say that." Grundled Mina disconsolately. "And I do

THINK THAT THE IVERS HAVE GROWN EXTRAORDINARILY STUPID—CAUGHT IT FROM BOB Broadley, I suppose."

WHEN INJUSTICE SPRINGS NOT FROM JUDGMENT BUT FROM TEMPER. IT IS NOT

worth arguing against. Neeld held his tongue and they sat silent on the SEAT BY THE RIVER, LOOKING ACROSS TO MERRION AND HEARING THE VOICES OF their friends through the open windows of the Long Gallery.

PRESENTLY THERE CAME TO THEM THROUGH THE STILLNESS OF THE NIGHT THE SOUND OF WHEELS, NOT ON THE BLENTINDUTH SIDE, BUT UP THE VALLEY, ON THE MINGHAM AND FILLNGFORD ROAD. THE SOUND CEASED WITHOUT THE

SOUND OF WHEELS, NOT ON THE BLENTWOUTH SIDE, BUT UP THE VALLEY, ON THE MINCHAM AND FILLINGFORD ROAD. THE SOUND CEASED WITHOUT THE APPEARANCE OF ANY VEHICLE, BUT IT HAD REMINDED NEELD OF THE PROCRESS of time.

"Bob Broadley's cart coming for him, I suppose."
"No, I DON'T THINK SO. HE'S COING BACK TO FARHOLME WITH US. I HEARD HIM say so."

MINA WAS LANGUIDLY INDIFFERENT. AND MR NEELD TROTTED OFF INTO THE HOUSE.

"IT MUST BE GETTING LATE," HE SAID, RISING. "I"LL GO AND SEE F THEY THINK OF starting home. Did you hear wheels on the road—toward the Pool?"

MINA SAT ON, FROMING AT THE IDEA THAT IN A FEW MINUTES SHE WOULD HAVE TO GO IN AND SAY GOOD-BY; FOR THE VOICES CAME NO MORE FROM THE LONG GALLERY AND SHE HEARD THE GUESTS LAUGHING AND CHATTERING IN THE HALL, AS THEY PREPARED FOR DEPARTURE. SUDDENLY SHE DISCEPTIVED THE FIGURE OF A MAN COMING INTO SIGHT ACROSS THE RIVER. HE WALKED SLOWLY, AS IT SEEMED STEALTHLY, TILL HE CAME TO THE BND OF THE FOOTBRIDGE. THEN HE HALTED AND LOOKED UP AT THE HOUSE. IT WAS GAYLY LIGHTED. AFTER WAITING A

SEEMED STEALTHLY, TILL HE CAME TO THE BND OF THE FOOTBRIDGE. THEN HE HALTED AND LOCKED UP AT THE HOUSE. IT WAS GAYLY LIGHTED. AFTER WAITING A MOMENT THE MAIN TURNED BACK AND DISAPPEARED UP THE ROAD IN THE DIRECTION OF MINCHAIM. MINA ROSE AND STROLLED TO THE BRIDGE. SHE CROSSED IT AND LOCKED UP THE ROAD. SHE COULD MAKE OUT DIMLY THE STRANGE'S RETREATING FORM.

SHE HEARD CECLY CALLING TO HER, AND RAN BACK TO THE HOUSE. A WONDERFUL IDEA HAD COME INTO HER HEAD, BORN OF A VAGUELY FAMILIAR.

WONDERFUL IDEA HAD COME INTO HER HEAD, BORN OF A VAGUELY FAMILIAR ASPECT THAT THE BEARING OF THE MAN HAD FOR HER. BUT SHE LAUGHED AT IT, TELLING HERSELF THAT IT WAS ALL NONSENSE, AND AS SHE JOINED IN THE TALK AND FAREWELLS IT GREW FAINT AND WAS ALMOST FORGOTTEN. YET SHE whispered to old Neeld with a laugh:

"I SAW A MAN ON THE ROAD JUST NOW WHO LOOKED RATHER LIKE HARRY. I couldn't see him properly, you know."

his stare with one of equal intensity.

NEELD STARTED AND LOOKED AT HER WITH OBVIOUS EXCITEMENT. SHE REPAID

"Why, you don't think——?" she began in amazement.

WHILE BOB IN IRREPRESSIBLE SPIRITS BURST INTO SONG AS HE GATHERED UP THE REINS. HE HAD DEPOSED THE COACHMAN AND HAD JANIE WITH HIM ON the box.

THEY DROVE OFF, WAVING THEIR HANDS AND SHOUTING GOOD-NIGHT. MINA RAN A LITTLE WAY AFTER THEM AND SAW NELLD TURNING HIS HEAD THIS WAY AND that, as though he thought there might be something to see. When she RETURNED SHE FOUND GAINSBOROUGH SAYING GOOD-NIGHT TO HIS DAUGHTER, AT THE SAME MOMENT THE LIGHTS IN THE LONG GALLERY WERE PUT OUT. CEOLY

"COVE NEED WE'RE WATING FOR YOU" ORIED IVER FROM THE WAGONETTE.

ACROSS THE RIVER, WITH MORE WAVING OF HANDS AND SHOUTS OF GOOD-NIGHT.

An absolute stillness came as the noise of its wheels died away.

"I'VE GOT THROUGH THAT ALL RIGHT," SAID CEOLY WITH A LAUGH, DRAWING HER
FRIEND WITH HER TOWARD THE BRIDGE. "I SUPPOSE I SHALL BE QUITE

SLIFFED HER ARM THROUGH HERS AND THEY WALKED OUT AGAIN INTO THE GARDEN. AFTER THREE OR FOUR MINUTES THE WAGONETTE, HAVING MADE THE ORGUIT NECESSARY TO REACH THE CARRIAGE-BRIDGE. DROVE BY ON THE ROAD

accustomed to it soon."

married too!

THEY WENT ON TO THE BRIDGE AND HALTED IN THE MIDDLE OF IT, BY A common impulse as it seemed.

"THE SOUND OF A RIVER ALWAYS SAYS TO ME THAT IT ALL DOESN'T MATTER MUCH," CEOLY WENT ON, LEANING ON THE PARAPET. "I BELIEVE THAT'S BEEN expressed more poetically!"

"It's GREAT NONSENSE, HOWEVER IT'S EXPRESSED," OBSERVED MINA scornfully.
"I sometimes feel as if it was true." Probably Ceolly thought that

"I SOMETIMES FEEL AS IF IT WAS TRUE" PROBABLY C'EOLY THOUGHT THAT NOBODY—NO GIRL—NO GIRL IN LOVE—HAD EVER HAD THE FEELING BEFORE. A

NUBBOTT — NO GREET NO GREET IN LOVE — PAUL EVER PAUL THE MOST DANGEROUS

DELUSIVE AFFEARANCE OF NOVELTY IS ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS

WEADONS OF CUPID. BUT MINA WAS AN EXPERIENCED WOMAN—HAD BEEN

SHE TURNED ROUND: CECILY STILL GAZED IN MELANCHOLY ABSTRACTION INTO THE STREAM, CECILY, THEN, FACED DOWN THE VALLEY, MINA LOOKED UP IT: AND AT THE MOMENT THE MOON SHOWED A CHARTER OF HER FACE AND ILLI MINATED A streak of the Fillingford road.

"DON'T TALK STUFF. MY DEAR." SHE ORIED CROSSLY. "AND WHY ARE WE

standing on this horrid little bridge?"

THE MAN WAS THERE. HE WAS THERE AGAIN. THE MOONLIGHT FELL ON HIS FACE. HE SMLED AT MINA. POINTED A HAND TOWARD BLENTIMOUTH, AND SMILED AGAIN. HE SEEMED TO MOCK THE IGNORANCE OF THE VANISHED

WAGONETTE. MINA MADE NO SIGN. HE LAID HIS FINGER ON HIS LIPS, AND NODDED SLIGHTLY TOWARD CECLY. THE CLOUDS COVERED THE MOON AGAIN. AND THERE WAS NO MORE ON THE FILLINGFORD ROAD THAN A BLACK BLOTCH ON THE DEEP GRAY OF THE NIGHT: EVEN THIS VANISHED A MOMENT AFTER, AND still Cecily gazed down into the Blent. PRESENTLY SHE TURNED ROUND. "I SUPPOSE WE MUST GO IN." SHE SAID.

AND HAD COME OUT WITHOUT ANY WRAPS. WITH THE INTUITION OF A BORN. schemer Mina seized on the chance. "OH. IT'S SO LOVELY!" SHE CRIED. WITH AN APPARENTLY OVERWHELMING ENTHUSIASM FOR NATURE. "Too PERFECTLY LOVELY! I'LL RUN IN AND GET SOME

GRUDGINGLY. "It'S GETTING RATHER CHLLY." THEY WERE BOTH IN LOW-OUT FROOKS,

OFF THE IMP RAN. AND VANISHED INTO THE HOUSE. BUT SHE MADE NO SEARCH FOR WRAPS. AFTER A MOMENT'S HESITATION IN THE HALL. THE DECETIFUL CREATURE RAN INTO THE LIBRARY, ALL WAS DARK THERE: A WINDOW WAS OPEN

AND SHOWED THE BRIDGE, WITH CEOLY'S FIGURE ON IT MAKING A WHITE BLUR IN THE DARKNESS. MINA CROUCHED ON THE WINDOW-SILL AND WAITED. THE ABSOLUTE UNPARDONABLENESS OF HER CONDUCT OCCURRED TO HER: WITH A

cloaks. Wait here till I come back. Cecilv." "WELL, DON'T BE LONG," SAID CECILY, CROSSING HER BARE ARMS WITH A LITTLE shiver

HARRY WAS HUMBLED! THAT WAS THE CONCLUSION WHICH SHOT THROUGH HER MIND. WHAT BLSE COULD HIS COMING MEAN? IF IT MEANT LESS THAN THAT, IT WAS MERE CRUELTY. IF IT MEANT THAT —— A KEEN PANG OF DISAPPOINTMENT. SHOT THROUGH HER. IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO WHAT SHE DESIRED. BUT IT WAS not the way which she would have preferred him to tread. Yet because IT WAS THE ONLY WAY. SHE WISHED IT-WITH THE RESERVATION THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MICH BETTER IE IT COLLD HAVE HAPPENED IN SOME OTHER FASHION. BUT ANYHOW THE POSITION, NOT TO SAY HER POSITION, HAD EVERY BLEMENT OF EXCITEMENT, "POOR OLD MR NEELD!" SHE MURMURED ONCE. IT WAS HARD ON HIM TO MISS THIS. AT THE MOMENT NEED WAS SMILING OVER THE IGNORANCE IN WHICH HE HAD BEEN BOLIND TO KEEP HER. IT IS NEVER SAFE TO SUPPOSE. HOWEVER PLEASANT IT MAY BE TO BELIEVE. THAT NOBODY IS PITYING US: EITHER OF HIS KNOWLEDGE OR OF HIS IGNORANCE SOMEONE IS always at it. SHE STARTED VIOLENTLY AND TURNED ROUND. THE BUTLER WAS THERE, CANDLE IN hand "IS HER LADYSHIP STILL OUT, MA'AM?" HE ASKED, ADVANCING, "I WAS GOING TO LOOK UP." HE WAS HARDLY SURPRISED TO FIND HER—THEY KNEW SHE WAS odd-and would not have shown it, if he had been. "OH, GO TO BED," SHE CRIED IN A LOW VOICE. "WE'LL LOCK UP. WE DON'T want anything, anything at all." "Very good. Good-night, ma'am." What an escape! Suppose Cecily had seen her at the window!

BUT CECLY WAS NOT LOOKING AT THE WINDOW. SHE MOVED TO THE FAR BND OF THE BRIDGE AND STOOD GAZING UP TOWARD MERRICN, WHERE ONE LIGHT TWINKLED IN AN UPPER ROOM. MINA SAW HER STRETCH OUT HER ARMS FOR A

SMILE SHE DISMISSED THE CONSIDERATION. HE—AND SHE—WHO DESIRES
THE END MUST NEEDS PUT UP WITH THE MEANS: IT IS ALL THE EASIER WHEN THE

means happen to be uncommonly thrilling.

HE HAD GONE AWAY! MINA CRANED HER HEAD OUT OF THE WINDOW, LOOKING AND LISTENING. HAPPEN WHAT MIGHT, BE THE END OF IT WHAT IT MIGHT, THIS SITUATION WAS DELICIOUSLY STRONG OF THE TRISTRAMS. THEY WERE REDEBMING THEIR CHARACTERS: THEY HAD NOT SETTLED DOWN INTO THE ORDINARY OR BEEN GILLEED IN THE SLOUGH OF THE COMMONELACE. UNEXPECTED APPEARANCES AND MIDNIGHT INTERVIEWS OF SENTIMENTAL MOMENT WERE STILL TO BE HOPED FOR FROM THEM. THERE WAS NOT YET AN end of all HE CAME: MINA SAW HIS FIGURE ON THE ROAD, AT FIRST DIMLY, THEN WITH A SUDDEN DISTINCTNESS AS A GLEAM OF MOONLIGHT SHONE OUT. HE STOOD A LITTLE WAY UP THE ROAD TO CEOLY'S RIGHT. SHE DID NOT SEE HIM YET, FOR SHE LOOKED UP TO MERRION. HE TOOK A STEP FORWARD, HIS TREAD SOUNDING LOUD ON THE ROAD. THERE WAS A SUDDEN TURN OF CECUY'S HEAD. A MOMENT'S SILENCE FOLLOWED. HE CAME UP TO HER. HOLDING OUT HIS HAND. SHE DREW BACK, SHRINKING FROM IT. LAYING HER HANDS ON THE GATE OF THE BRIDGE. SHE SEEMED TO SET IT AS A FENCE BETWEEN THEM. HER VOICE REACHED. MINA'S EARS. LOW. YET AS DISTINCT AS THOUGH SHE HAD BEEN BY HER SIDE. and full of a terrified alarm and a bitter reproach.

MOMENT TOWARD THE SKY. WHAT HAD HAPPENED? IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE THAT

and full of a terrified alarm and a bitter reproach.

"You here! Oh, you promised, you promised!"

With a bound Mina's conscience awoke. She had heard what no ears save his had any right to hear. What if she were found? The conscience was not above asking that, but it was not below reling an intolerable shawe even without the discovery that it suggested as her punishwent. Blushing red there in the dark, she sulfred from the window-seat and groped her way to a chair. Here she flung herself

the promise was broken in his coming.

Now sie leard tiler sters on the rath outside, they were walking toward the house. Telling herself that it was impossible for her to

DOWN WITH A SOB OF EXCITEMENT AND EMOTION. HE HAD PROMISED, AND

MOVE NOW. FOR FEAR SHE SHOULD ENCOUNTER THEM, SHE SANK LOWER IN HER

"Well, where shall we go?" she heard Cecily ask in cold, stiff tones.

THE NEXT MOMENT OLD MASON THE BUTLER WAS IN THE ROOM AGAIN. THIS

time in great excitement. "THERE'S SOMEONE IN THE GARDEN WITH HER LADYSHIP, MA'AM," HE CRIED.

"Who?" asked Mina, sitting up, feigning to be calm and sleepy.

"Oh! Well then, go and see."

"To the Long Gallery." said Harry.

"I think—I think it's my Lord!"

"Mr Harry, I mean, ma'am."

should think of sandwiches now?

arm-chair.

The old man turned and went out into the hall.

"How are you. Mason?" she heard Harry say, "Her Ladyship and I

have some business to talk about. May I have a sandwich afterward?" THERE HE WAS, SPOILING THE DRAMA, IN MINA'S HUMBLE OPINION! WHO

"Do what Mr Tristram says, Mason," said Cecily, SHE HEARD THEM BEGIN TO MOUNT THE STAIRS, JUMPING UP, SHE RAN SOFTLY TO THE DOOR AND OUT INTO THE HALL. MASON STOOD THERE WITH HIS CANDLE.

STARING UP AFTER CECLY AND HARRY. HE TURNED TO MINA WITH A CUZZICAL smile wrinkling his good-natured face.

"YOU'D THINK IT A FUNNY TIME FOR BUSINESS, WOULDN'T YOU, MA'AM?" HE ASKED. HE PAUSED A MOMENT, STROKING HIS CHIN, "UNLESS YOU'D HAPPENED TO BE IN SERVICE TWENTY YEARS WITH HER LATE LADYSHIP, WELL.

I'm glad to see him again, anyhow."

"What shall we do?" whispered Mina. "Are you going to bed. Mason?" "NOT ME. MA'AM. WHY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT MAYN'T HAPPEN BEFORE THE

MORNING!" HE SHOOK HIS HEAD IN HI MOROLIS COMMENTARY ON THOSE HE had served. "But there's no call for you to sit up, ma'am."

"I'LL THANK YOU TO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS. MASON." SAID THE IMP INDIGNANTLY. "IT WOULD BE MOST—MOST IMPROPER IF I DIDN'T SIT UP. WHY.

it's nearly midnight!" "They won't think of that up there." said he.

THE SOUND OF A DOOR SLAMMED CAME FROM LESTAIRS. MINA'S EYES MET. MASON'S FOR A MOMENT BY AN INVOLUNTARY IMPULSE, THEN HASTILY TURNED

AWAY. IT IS AN EXCELLENT THING TO BE OUT OF THE REACH OF TEMPTATION. THE

door was shut!

"GIVE WE A CANDLE HERE IN THE LIBRARY." SAID MINA WITH ALL HER DIGNITY.

And there, in the library, she sat down to wonder and to wait.

MASON WENT OFF AFTER THE SANDWICHES, SMILING STILL, THERE WAS REALLY

nothing odd in it, when once you were accustomed to the family ways.

XXVII

Before Translation

HARRY TRISTRAM HAD COME BACK TO BLEVE IN THE MOOD WHICH BELONGED. TO THE PLACE AS OF OLD—THE MOOD THAT CLAIMED AS HIS RIGHT WHAT HAD BECOME HIS BY LOVE, KNEW NO SCRUPLES IF ONLY HE COULD GAIN AND KEEP IT. WAS READY TO PLAY A BOLD GAME AND TAKE A GREAT CHANCE. HE DID NOT ARGUE ABOUT WHAT HE WAS GOING TO DO. HE DID NOT JUSTIEY IT. AND PERHAPS COULD NOT. YET TO HIM WHAT HE PURPOSED WAS SO CLEARLY THE BEST THING THAT CECLY MUST BE FORCED INTO IT. SHE COLUD NOT BE FORCED BY FORCE IF HE TOLD HER THE TRUTH. HE WOULD MEET AT THE OUTSET A RESISTANCE WHICH HE COULD NOT QUELL. HE MIGHT ENCOUNTER THAT AFTER ALL. LATER ON, IN SPITE OF A PRESENT SUCCESS. THAT WAS THE GREAT RISK HE WAS DETERMINED TO RUN. AT THE WORST THERE WOULD BE SOMETHING GAINED; IF SHE WERE AND WOULD BE NOTHING ELSE. SHE SHOULD AND MUST AT LEAST BE MISTRESS OF BLENT, HIS IMAGINATION HAD SET HER IN THAT PLACE HIS PRIDE. NO LESS THAN HIS LOVE. DEWANDED IT FOR HER. HE HAD GONE AWAY ONCE THAT SHE MIGHT HAVE IT. IF NEED BE, AGAIN HE WOULD GO AWAY. THAT STOOD for decision later.

SHE WALKED SLOWLY TO THE BND OF THE LONG GALLERY AND SAT DOWN IN THE GREAT ARM-CHAIR; IT HELD ITS OLD POSITION IN SPITE OF THE CHANGES WHICH HARRY NOTED WITH QUICK EYES AND A SUPPRESSED SMLE AS HE FOLLOWED HER AND SET HIS CANDLE ON A TABLE NEAR. HE LIT TWO MORE FROM IT AND then turned to her. She was pale and defiant.

"Well." she said. "why are you here?"

SHE ASKED AND HE GAVE NO EXCUSE FOR THE UNTIMELY HOUR OF HIS VISIT

thing to both of them. "I'M HERE BECAUSE I COULDN'T KEEP AWAY." HE ANSWERED GRAVELY. standing before her.

AND NO EXPLANATION OF IT. IT SEEMED A SWALL, PERHAPS INDEED A NATURAL.

"You promised to keep away. Can't you keep promises?" "No. not such promises as that."

"AND SO YOU MAKE MY LIFE IMPOSSIBLE! YOU SEE THIS ROOM, YOU SEE HOW I'VE CHANGED IT? I'VE BEEN CHANGING EVERYTHING I COULD. WHY? TO FORGET YOU. TO BLOT YOU OUT. TO BE RID OF YOU. I'VE BEEN BRINGING MYSELF TO TAKE MY PLACE. TO-NIGHT I SEEMED AT LAST TO BE WINNING MY WAY TO IT.

Now you come. You gave me all this: Why do you make it impossible TO ME?" A BRIGHT COLOR CAME ON HER CHEEKS NOW AS SHE GREW vehement in her reproaches, and her voice was intense, though low.

A LUXURY OF JOY SWEPT OVER HIM AS HE LISTENED. EVERY TAUNT WITNESSED TO HIS POWER, EVERY REPROACH TO HER LOVE. HE PLAYED A TRICK INDEED AND A part, but there was no trick and no acting in so far as he was her lover.

If that truth could not redeem his deception, it stifled all sense of quilt. "AND YOU WERE FORGETTING? YOU WERE GETTING RID OF ME?" HE ASKED.

smiling and fixing his eves on her. "Perhaps. And now---!" She made a gesture of despair. "Tell me-

why have you come?" Her tone changed to entreaty. "I'VE COME BECAUSE I MUST BE WHERE YOU ARE, BECAUSE I WAS MAD TO SEND YOU AWAY BEFORE, MAD NOT TO COME TO YOU BEFORE, TO THINK I COULD

LIVE WITHOUT YOU, NOT TO SEE THAT WE TWO MUST BE TOGETHER: BECAUSE YOU'RE EVERYTHING TO ME." HE HAD COME NEARER TO HER NOW AND STOOD

BY HER. "EVER SINCE I WENT AWAY I HAVE SEEN YOU IN THIS ROOM, IN THAT

CHAIR. I THINK IT WAS YOUR GHOST ONLY THAT CAME TO TOWN." HE LAUGHED A MOMENT, "I WOULDN'T HAVE THE GHOST, I DIDN'T KNOW WHY. NOW I KNOW, I

WANTED THE YOU THAT WAS HERE.—THE REAL YOU.—AS YOU HAD BEEN ON THE NIGHT I WENT AWAY. SO I'VE COME BACK TO YOU. WE'RE OURSELVES HERE, Cecily. We Tristrams are ourselves at Blent."

SHE HAD LISTENED SILENTLY, HER EYES ON HIS. SHE SEEMED BEWILDERED BY THE SUDDEN RUSH OF HIS PASSION AND THE ENRAPTURED EAGERNESS OF HIS WORKS THAT MADE HER OWN VEHINLENCE SOLIND TO HER POOR AND THN

PRIDE HAD ITS SHARE IN HER PROTEST, LOVE WAS THE SOLE SPRING OF HIS INTENSITY. YET SHE WAS RUZZLED BY THE VICTORIOUS LIGHT IN HIS EYES. WHAT HE SAID, WHAT HE CAME TO DO, WAS SUCH A SURRENDER AS SHE HAD NEVER hoped from him; and he was triumphant in surrendering!

THE THOUGHT FLASHED THROUGH HER MIND, TROUBLING HER AND FOR THE TIME hindering her joy in his confession. She did not trust him yet.

"I'VE HAD AN OFFER MADE TO ME," HE RESUMED, REGAINING HIS COMPOSURE. "A SORT OF POLITICAL POST. IF I ACCEPT IT I SHALL HAVE TO LEAVE ENGLAND FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME, ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. THAT BROUGHT THE THING TO A POINT." AGAIN HE LAUGHED. "IT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU TOO; BECAUSE IF YOU SAY NO TO ME TO-NIGHT. YOU'LL BE RID OF ME FOR EVER SO

LONG. YOUR LIFE WON'T BE MADE IMPOSSIBLE. I SHOULDN'T COME TO BLENT again."

"A post that would take you away?" she murmured.

"YES. YOU'D BE LEFT HERE IN PEACE. I'VE NOT COME TO BLACKMAIL YOU INTO

LOVING ME, CECILY. YES, YOU SHALL BE LETT IN PEACE TO MOVE THE FURNITURE
ABOUT." GLANCING TOWARD THE TABLE, HE SAW MR GAINSBOROUGH'S
BIRTHDAY GIFT. HE TOOK IT UP, LOOKED AT IT FOR A MOMENT, AND THEN
REPLACED IT. HIS MANNER WAS INVOLUNTARILY EXPRESSIVE. EVEN IF SHE

REPLACED IT. HIS MANNER WAS INVOLUNTARILY EXPRESSIVE. EVEN IF SHE BROUGHT THAT SORT OF THING TO BLENT——! HE TURNED BACK AT THE SOUND OF a little laugh from Cecily and found her eyes sparkling.

"Father's birthday present, Harry," said she. Delichted with Her Mrith, He came to Her, Holding out His Hands. She "Sit as my mother did. You know. Yes. like that!" he cried. SHE HAD OBEYED HIM WITH A SMLE. NOT TO BE DENIED NOW, HE SEZED. the hand that lav in her lap. "A BIRTHDAY! YES, OF COURSE, YOU'RE TWENTY-ONE! REALLY MISTRESS OF IT ALL NOW! AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT. EXCEPT SPOIL THE arrangement of the furniture?" She laughed low and luxuriously. "What am I to do with it?" she asked. "WELL. WON'T YOU GIVE IT ALL TO ME?" AS HE SPOKE HE LAUGHED AND KISSED HER HAND. "I'VE COME TO ASK YOU FOR IT. HERE I AM. I'VE COME fortune-hunting to-night." "It's all mine now, you say? Harry, take it without me." "If I did. I'd burn it to the ground that it mightn't remind me of you." "YES, YES! THAT'S WHAT I'VE WANTED TO DO!" SHE EXCLAIMED, DRAWING HER HAND OUT OF HIS AND RAISING HER ARMS A MOMENT IN THE AIR ADDIE

shook her head and leant back, looking at him.

Tristram's pose was gone, but Harry did not miss it now.

"Take it without you indeed! It's all for you and because of you." "REALLY, REALLY?" SHE GREW GRAVE. "HARRY, DEAR, FOR PITY'S SAKE TELL ME IF

vou love me!" "HAVEN'T I TOLD YOU?" HE CRIED GAYLY, "WHERE ARE THE POETS? OH, FOR

SOME GOOD QUOTATIONS! I'M INFERNALLY UNPOETICAL. I KNOW. IS THIS IT-THAT

YOU'RE ALWAYS BEFORE MY EYES, ALWAYS IN MY HEAD, THAT YOU'RE

IN THE WAY. THAT WHEN I'VE GOT ANYTHING WORTH THINKING I THINK IT TO YOU.

ANYTHING WORTH DOING I DO IT FOR YOU. ANYTHING GOOD TO SAY I SAY IT TO

YOU? IS THIS IT, THAT I CURSE MYSELF AND CURSE YOU? IS THIS IT, THAT I KNOW MYSELF ONLY AS YOUR LOVER AND THAT IF I'M NOT THAT, THEN I SEEM NOTHING AT

"And you'll take Blent from me?"
"Yes, as the climax of all, I'll take Blent from you."
To HER IT SEEMED THE CLIMAX, THE THING SHE FOUND HARDEST TO BELIEVE,

NAY, NOW HE HINSELF FORSOT HS TRICK, AND COULD STILL HAVE GONE ON HAD THERE BEEN NONE, HAD HE IN TRUTH BEEN ACCEPTING BLENT FROM HER HANDS. Even at the price of pride he would have had her now.

SHE ROSE SUDDENLY, AND BEGAN TO WALK TO AND FRO ACROSS THE END OF

the room, while he stood by the table watching her.

THE BEST EVIDENCE FOR THE TRUTH OF THOSE EXTRAVAGANT WORDS WHICH SOLINDED SO SWEET IN HER FARS. HARRY SAW THIS BUT HE HELD ON HIS WAY

all? I've never been in love before, but all that sounds rather like it."

"Well, Isn't it time you said something to Me?" He suggested with a smile.

"GIVE ME TIME, HARRY, GIVE ME TIME. THE WORLD'S ALL CHANGED TO NICHT.
YOU—YES, YOU CAME SUDDENLY OUT OF THE DARKNESS OF THE NICHT"—SHE
WAVED HER HAND TOWARD THE WINDOW—"AND CHANGED THE WORLD FOR ME.

How am I to believe it? And if I can believe it, what can I say? Let me alone for a minute, Harry dear."

He was well content to wait and watch. All time seemed before them, and how better could he fill it? He seemed himself to suffer in this hour

A JOYFUL TRANSFORMATION; TO KNOW BETTER WHY MEN LIVED AND LOVED TO LIVE, TO REACH OUT TO THE FULL STRENGTH AND THE FULL FUNCTION OF HIS BBING. THE world changed for him as he changed it for her.

TWICE AND THRICE SHE HAD PACED THE GALLERY BEFORE SHE CAME AND STOOD OPPOSITE TO HIM. SHE PUT HER HANDS UP TO HER THROAT, SAYING, "I'M stifled—stifled with happiness, Harry."

FOR ANSWER HE SPRANG FORWARD AND CAUCHT HER IN HIS ARMS. IN THE MOVEMENT HE BRUSHED ROUGHLY AGAINST THE TABLE: THERE WAS A LITTLE ON THE FLOOR. FOR THE SECOND TIME THEIR LOVE BORE HARD ON MR GAINSBOROUGH'S CROCKERY. STARTLED THEY TURNED TO LOOK, AND THEN THEY BOTH BROKE INTO MERRY LAUGHTER. THE TRUMPERY THING HAD SEEMED A SIGN TO THEM, AND NOW THE SIGN WAS BROKEN. THEIR FIRST KISS WAS MIRTHFUL OVER ITS DESTRUCTION.

CRASH, AND POOR MR GAINSBOROUGH'S BIRTHDAY GIFT LAY SMASHED TO BITS

"THAT'S SETTLED THEN," SAID HARRY. HE PAUSED A MOMENT. "YOU HAD JANE AND BOB BROADLEY HERE TO-NIGHT? I SAW THEM AS I LAY HIDDEN BY the road. Does that kind of engagement attract you, Cecily?"

"Ours won't be like that." she said. laughing triumphantly.

With a sigh of joy she disengaged herself from him.

"Don't Let's have one at ALL," He successibly, coming them and her again.

"Let's have no engagement, Just a wedding."

"What?" she cried.
"IT MUST BE A BEASTLY TIME." HE WENT ON, "AND ALL THE TALK THERE'S BEEN

ABOUT US WILL MAKE IT MORE BEASTLY STILL. FANCY MISS S. AND ALL THE REST OF THEM! AND—DO YOU PARTICULARLY WANT TO WAIT? WHAT I WANT IS TO BE settled down, here with you."

HER EYES SPARKLED AS SHE LISTENED: SHE WAS IN THE MOOD. SHE WAS OF

the stuff, for any adventure.
"I SHOULD LIKE TO RUN OFF WITH YOU NOW," SAID HE. "I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE
YOU at all. YOU see."

"Run off now?" She gave a Joyful Little Laugh. "That's just what I should

"RUN OFF NOW?" SHE GAVE A JOYFUL LITTLE LAUCH. "THAT'S JUST WHAT I SHOULD like!"

irke!"
"Then we'll do it." he declared. "Well. to-morrow morning anyhow."

"Do vou mean it?" she asked.

"Do you say no to it?" SHE DREW HERSELF UP WITH PRIDE. "I SAY NO TO NOTHING THAT YOU ASK OF me." THER HANDS MET AGAIN AS SHE DECLARED HER LOVE AND TRUST, "YOU'VE REALLY COME TO ME?" HE HEARD HER MURMUR. "BACK TO BUENT AND BACK TO me?" "YES." HE ANSWERED. SMILING. SHE HAD BROUGHT INTO HIS MIND AGAIN THE

TRUTH SHE DID NOT KNOW. HE HAD NO TIME TO THINK OF IT. FOR SHE OFFERED. HIM HER LIPS AGAIN. THE MOMENT WHEN HE MIGHT HAVE TOLD HER THUS

WENT BY. IT WAS BUT AN IMPULSE. FOR HE STILL LOVED WHAT HE WAS DOING. AND TOOK DELIGHT IN THE RISKS OF IT. AND HE COULD NOT BEAR SO TO IMPAIR.

HER JOY. SOON SHE MUST KNOW, BUT SHE SHOULD NOT YET BE ROBBED OF HER

JOY THAT IT WAS SHE WHO COULD BRING HIM BACK TO BLENT. FOR HIM IN HIS KNOWLEDGE. FOR HER IN HER IGNORANCE. THERE WAS AN ADDED RICHNESS OF PLEASURE THAT HE WOULD NOT THROW AWAY. EVEN ALTHOUGH NOW HE BELIEVED THAT WERE THE TRUTH KNOWN SHE WOULD COME TO HIM STILL. MUST

not that be, since now he, even he, would come to her, though the truth had been otherwise? "THERE'S A TRAIN FROM FILLINGFORD AT EIGHT IN THE MORNING. I'M GOING BACK

THERE TO NIGHT. I'VE GOT A FLY WAITING BY THE POOL-IF THE MAN HASN'T GONE TO SLEEP AND THE HORSE RUN AWAY. WILL YOU MEET ME THERE? WE'LL GO UP to town and be married as soon as we can—the day after to-morrow. I suppose."

"And then----?"

"Oh, then just come back here. We can go nowhere but here. Cecily." "Just come back and——?"

"And let them find it out, and talk, and talk, and talk!" he laughed.

"It would be delightful!" she cried.

"You'll be gone before he's up. Leave a line for him." "But I—I can't go alone with you." "Why not?" asked Harry, seeming a trifle vexed. "I'll tell you!" she cried. "Let's take Mina with us. Harry!" HE LAUGHED: THE IMP WAS THE ONE PERSON WHOSE PRESENCE HE WAS ready to endure. Indeed there would perhaps be a piguancy in that. "ALL RIGHT, AN ELOPEMENT MADE RESPECTABLE BY MINA!" HE HAD A TOLICH of scorn even for mitigated respectability. "Shall we call her and tell her now?" "Well, are you tired of this interview?" "I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I WANT IT TO GO ON, OR WHETHER I MUST GO AND TELL somebody about it." "I shouldn't hesitate." smiled Harry. "You? No. But I—Oh, Harry dear, I want to whisper my triumph." "But we must be calm and business-like about it now." "YES!" SHE ENTERED EAGERLY INTO THE FUN. "THAT'LL PUZZLE MINA EVEN more."

"We're not doing anything unusual," he insisted with affected gravity.

"Nobody to know till it's done!"

"No—not for our family at least."
"It's just the obvious thing to do."

"Yes, ves. I like it like that, Not father even, though?"

"OH. IT'S JUST THE DELICIOUS THING TOO!" SHE ALMOST DANCED IN GAYETY. "Let me call Mina. Do!" "Not for a moment, as you love me! Give me a moment more." "Oh. Harry, there'll be no end to that!" "I don't know why there should be." "We should miss the train at Fillingford!" "Ah, if it means that!" "OR I SHALL COME SLEEPY AND UGLY TO IT: AND YOU'D LEAVE ME ON THE platform and go away!" "Shout for Mina—now—without another word!" "Oh, just one more," she pleaded, laughing. "I can't promise to be moderate." "COME, WE'LL GO AND FIND HER. GIVE ME YOUR HAND." SHE CAUGHT HIS HAND IN HERS. AND SNATCHED THE CANDLE FROM THE TABLE. SHE HELD IT HIGH ABOVE HER HEAD. LOOKING ROUND THE ROOM AND BACK TO HIS EYES AGAIN. "MY HOME NOW, BECAUSE MY LOVE IS HERE." SHE SAID, "MINE AND YOURS,

and yours and mine—and both the same thing, Harry, now."

He listened smiling. Yes, it would be the same thing now. THERE THEY STOOD TOGETHER FOR A MOMENT, AND TOGETHER THEY SIGHED AS they turned away. To them the room was sacred now, as it had always

been beautiful: in it their love seemed to lie enshrined. THEY WENT DOWNSTAIRS TOGETHER FULL OF MERRIMENT. THE SURFACE

EXPRESSION OF THEIR JOY. "LOOK GRAVE," HE WHISPERED, SETTING HIS FACE IN A COMICAL EXAGGERATION OF SERIOUSNESS. CEOLY TRIED TO OBEY AND tumbled into a gurgle of delight.

"I WILL DIRECTLY," SHE GASPED AS THEY CAME TO THE HALL. MASON STOOD there waiting.

"I've put the sandwiches here, and the old brown, my Lord,"

HARRY ALONE NOTICED THE SLIP IN HIS ADDRESS—AND HARRY TOOK NO NOTICE of it.

"I SHALL BE GLAD TO MEET THE OLD BROWN AGAIN," HE SAID, SMILING. MASON

gave the pair a benevolent glance and withdrew to his quarters.

MINA STROLLED OUT OF THE LIBRARY WITH AN ACCIDENTAL AIR HARRY HAD SAT.

Mina strolled out of the library with an acobental air. Harry had sat down to his sandwiches and old brown. Cecily ran across to Mina and kissed her.

"WE'RE GOING TO BE MARRIED!" SHE WHSPERED. SHE HAD TOLD IT ALL IN A SENTENCE, YET SHE ADDED; "OH, I'VE SUCH A HEAP OF THINGS TO TELL YOU,

MINA!" WAS NOT ALL THAT SCENE IN THE LONG GALLERY TO BE REPRODUCED—DOUBTLESS ONLY IN A FAINT ADUMBRATION OF ITS REAL GLORY, YET WITH A SENSE of recovering it and living it again?

"No?" cried Mina. "Oh, how splendid! Soon?"

HARRY THREW A QUOK GLANCE AT CECILY. SHE RESPONDED BY ASSUMING A demure calmness of demeanor.

"NOT AS SOON AS WE COULD WISH," SAID HARRY, MUNCHING AND SIPPING.
"IN FACT, NOT BEFORE THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW, I'M AFRAID, MADAME ZADriska."

"The day after——?"
"What I have always hated is Government intercence. Why can't I be

"What I have always hated is Goventment interference. Why can't I be marked when I like? Why have I to get a license and all that

NONSENSE? WHY MUST I WAIT TILL THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW?" HE GREW INDIGNANT.

these absurd restrictions. There's a train at eight from Fillingford——" "You're going—both of you—by that?" Mina cried. "I HOPE IT SUITS YOU, BECAUSE WE WANT YOU TO COME WITH US, IF YOU'LL BE so kind." said Harry. "You see it would look just a little unusual if we went alone." Added Cecilv. "AND IT'S NOT GOING TO LOOK UNUSUAL ANYHOW? ARE YOU MAD? OR-OR DO vou mean it?" "DON'T YOU THINK BOTH MAY BE TRUE?" ASKED HARRY. CECILY'S GRAVITY BROKE DOWN, SHE KISSED MINA AGAIN, LAUGHING IN AN ABANDONWENT OF exultation. "Oh. vou're both mad!" "NOT AT ALL. YOU'RE JUDGING US BY THE STANDARD OF YOUR OTHER ENGAGED couple to-night." "DID MR NEELD KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR COMING?" MINA DEWANDED.

"It's past twelve now: it is to-morrow." said Cecily.

"QUITE SO, AS YOU SUGGEST, CECLY, WE COULD BE MARRIED TO-DAY BUT FOR

"Nothing at all. Did he say anything to You?" For a moment the glass of old brown halted on its way to his lips, and he glanced at Mina sharply.

with a sudden recollection.

"No. But when I asked him if he had seen you he Looked—well, Just rather funny."

The old brown resumed its progress. Harry was content.

"THERE'S NO BETTER MEAL THAN FRESH SANDWICHES AND OLD BROWN," HE

at the little house till we fix it up?" MINA LOOKED FROM ONE TO THE OTHER IN NEW AWAZEMENT, WITH ALL HER OLD EXCITED PLEASURE IN THE TRISTRAM WAYS. THEY DID A THING—AND THEY DID

OBSERVED. "YOU'LL COME WITH US. WON'T YOU. AND KEEP CECILY COMPANY

not spoil it by explanations. "And Mr Gainsborough?" she asked.

"We're going to leave a note for father." smiled Cecily. "You're always doing that." objected Mina.

"It seems rather an early train for Mr Gainsborough." Harry suggested. laving down his napkin.

"OH, WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT IT?" CRIED MINA despairingly, "But it's true? The great thing's true anyhow, isn't it?"

"Well, what do you think I came down from town for?" inquired Harry. "And why have we been so long in the Gallery, Mina?"

"YOU'VE GIVEN IN THEN?" EXCLAIMED THE IMP, POINTING A FINGER IN TRIUMPH at Harry. "Mina, how can you say a thing like that?"

"IT LOOKS AS IF IT WERE TRUE ENOUGH," ADMITTED HARRY, "REALLY I MUST GO," HE ADDED. "I CAN'T KEEP THAT FLY ALL NIGHT. I SHALL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING. Madame Zabriska, Eight o'clock at Fillingford!"

"I'm really to go with you?" she gasped.

"YES. YES. I THOUGHT ALL THAT WAS SETTLED," SAID HE, RATHER IMPATIENTLY.

"Bring a pretty frook. I want my wedding to be done handsomely—in a

Tristram of Blent."

STYLE THAT SUITS THE WEDDING OF --- "HE LOOKED AT CEOLY-"OF LADY

"YES!" CRIED CECILY. "ALL A DELICIOUS DELICIOUS JOKE! BUT WE'RE GOING TO he married " AFTER A MOVENT'S HESITATION MINA CAME ACROSS TO HARRY, HOLDING OUT

HER HANDS. "I'M GLAD, I'M SO GLAD," SHE MURMURED, WITH A LITTLE CATCH IN

will," he added the next moment with a laugh.

"It's really the only way to be married." declared Cecily.

"Cecily, it's not all a joke?"

her voice

"She couldn't keep away." mocked Harry. "She's got to see the end of us." "YES, AND OUR NEW BEGINNING, OH, WHAT BLENT'S GOING TO BE, MINA! IF you don't come with us now, we won't let you stay at Merrion."

"Well. For you people—for you extraordinary Tristrams—I dare say it

HE TOOK HER HANDS AND PRESSED THEM: HE LOOKED AT HER VERY KINDLY. though he smiled still. "Yes, it undoes all the mistakes, doesn't it?" he said, "At least I hope it

is." said Mina. "You'll come?" Cecily implored.

"I'M COMING." SAID MINA. INDEED SHE WOULD NOT HAVE STAYED AWAY. IF she had needed further inducement the next moment supplied it. "You're to be our only confidant." said Harry.

"Yes! Till it's all over, nobody's to know but you. Mina." The Imp was hit on her weak spot. She was tremulously eager to go.

"Eight o'clock! Oh, can we be ready, Cecily?"

HARRY HAD TAKEN HIS HAT FROM THE TABLE AND CAME UP TO SHAKE HANDS. He was imperturbably calm and business-like. "Don't run it too fine." he said. "Good-night. Madame Zabriska."

SHE GAVE HIM HER HAND AND HE HELD IT FOR A MOMENT. HE GREW A LITTLE

"YOU'RE A GOOD FRIBND." HE SAID. "I SHALL COME ON YOU AGAIN. IF I WANT

you, you know." He raised her hand to his lips and kissed it.

grave, but there was still a twinkle in his eve.

"Of course we shall be ready." said Cecily scornfully.

"I DON'T KNOW THAT I CARE MUCH ABOUT ANYTHING EXCEPT YOU TWO." stammered Mina

HE GRIPPED HER HAND AGAIN. SHE SEEMED WELL PAID. HE HELD OUT HIS

hand to Cecily. Mina understood. "I SHALL BE UP A LITTLE WHILE, CEOLY, COME TO ME BEFORE YOU GO TO BED." SHE SAID: AND SHE STOOD IN THE HALL, WATCHING THEM AS THEY WALKED OUT TOGETHER. THERE WAS JOY IN HER HEART-AY, AND BNVY. THE TWO BROUGHT

TEARS TO HER EYES AND STRUGGLED WHICH SHOULD MAKE THE BETTER CLAIM TO THEM. "BUT THEY DO LIKE ME!" SHE SAID IN A PLAINTIVE YET GLAD LITTLE CRY. as she was left alone in the silent old hall. SO STILL WAS THE NIGHT THAT A MAN MIGHT HEAR THE VOICE OF HIS HEART AND

A GIRL THE THROB OF HERS. AND THEY WERE ALONE, OR ONLY THE FRIENDLY MURMUR OF OLD BLENT WAS WITH THEM, SEEMING TO WHISPER CONGRATULATIONS ON THEIR JOY. HER ARM WAS THROUGH HIS. VERY WHITE ON

"After tempests, dear," said he. "There shall be no more, no more, Harry,"

his sleeve, and she leant on him heavily.

"OH. I DON'T KNOW THAT, I SHALL LIKE YOU IN THEM PERHAPS, AND THERE MAY

"Why, yes, at anything just now."

"YES, AT ANYTHING," SHE MURMURED. "I COULD LAUGH—OR CRY—AT ANYTHING just now."

They came to the little bridge and passed on to it.

"WE TALKED HERE THE FIRST EVENING," SAID SHE. "AND HOW YOU PUZZLED

"Yes, AND FOR ME A LITTLE SOONER—BY THE POOL FOR ME. I WAS KEEPING you out of your own then."

"Never mine unless it could be yours too."

me! It began for me then, dear Harry."

be one more, anyhow."
"You're laughing, Harry?"

after tempests, Harry!"

FALLEN INTO SILENCE AGAIN, THEY REACHED THE ROAD AND, MOVED BY THE SAME INSTINCT, TURNED TO LOOK BACK AT BLENT. THE GRIP OF HER HAND tightened on his arm.

"There's nothing that would make you leave me?" she whispered.

"Not you yourself, I think," said he.
"It's very wonder-u.," she breathed. "Listen! There's no sound. Yes.

"I AM GLAD OF IT ALL," HE SAID SUDDENLY AND IN A LOUDER TONE. "I'VE BEEN MADE A MAN, AND I'VE FOUND YOU, THE WOMAN FOR ME. IT WAS HARD AT THE TIME, BUT I AM GLAD OF IT. IT HAS COME AND IT HAS GONE, AND I'M GLAD OF IT."

HE HAD SPOKEN UNWARLY IN SAYING IT WAS CONE. BUT SHE THOUGHT HE spoke of his struggle only and his hesitation, not of their cause.

"You gave when you might have KEPT: IT IS ALWAYS YOURS. HARRY. OH AND WHAT IS IT ALL NOW? NO. NO. IT'S SOMETHING STILL. IT'S IN US—IN US BOTH. I think " He stopped on the road. "Come no farther. The fly's only a little way on, and while I see you. I WILL SEE NOBODY BLSE TO-NIGHT. TILL THE MORNING, DEAREST—AND YOU WON'T fail?" "No. I won't fail. Should I fail to greet my first morning?" HE PUSHED THE HAIR A LITTLE BACK FROM HER FOREHEAD AND KISSED HER hrow "GOD DO SO UNTO ME AND MORE ALSO IF MY LOVE EVER FAILS YOU." SAID HE. "Kiss me as I kissed you. And so good-night." SHE OBEYED AND LET HIM GO. ONCE AND TWICE HE LOOKED BACK AT HER AS HE TOOK HIS WAY AND SHE STOOD STILL ON THE ROAD. SHE HEARD HIS VOICE SPEAKING TO THE FLYMAN. THE FLYMAN'S EXHORTATION TO HIS HORSE. THE SOUNDS OF THE WHEELS RECEDING ALONG THE ROAD. THEN SLOWLY SHE WENT back. "THIS IS WHAT THEY MEAN." SHE MURMURED TO HERSELF. "THIS IS WHAT THEY MEAN." IT WAS THE JOY PAST EXPRESSION THE CONTENTMENT PAST. UNDERSTANDING, AND ALL IN ONE EVENING THEY HAD SPRUNG UP FOR HER OUT. OF A BARREN THESTY LAND. BLENT HAD NEVER BEEN BEALTIFUL BEFORE NOR THE RIVER SPARKLED AS IT RAN: YOUTH WAS NOT KNOWN BEFORE. AND BEAUTY HAD BEEN THROWN AWAY. THE WORLD WAS CHANGED: AND IT WAS VERY wonderful. WHEN CECLY WENT INTO HER THE IMP WAS PACKING: WITH CRITICAL CARE SHE stowed her smartest frock in the trunk. "I MUST BE UP FARLY AND SEE ABOUT THE CARRIAGE." SHE REWARKED. "I dare say Mason——. But you're not listening. Cecily!"

"No, I wasn't listening," said Cecily, scorning apology or excuse.
"You people in love are very silly. That's the plain English of it," observed Mina loftily.
CECLY LOOKED AT HER A MINUTE, THEN STRETCHED HER ARMS AND SIGHED IN LUXURIOUS WEARINESS. "I DARE SAY THAT'S THE FLAIN ENGLISH OF IT," SHE admitted. "But, oh, how different it sounds before translation, dear!"

XXVIII

The Cat and the Bell

MR GAINSBOROUGH LOST HIS HEAD. HE MIGHT HAVE ENDURED THE NOTE THAT HAD BEEN LEFT FOR HIM-IT SAID ONLY THAT HIS DAUGHTER HAD GONE TO TOWN. FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS WITH MINA ZABRISKA: BESIDES HE HAD HAD NOTES LEFT FOR HIM BEFORE, BUT THERE WAS MASON'S ACCOUNT OF THE FYRNING AND OF THE MORNING-OF HARRY'S ARRIVAL, OF THE CONFERENCE IN THE LONG GALLERY. OF THE SANDWICHES AND THE OLD BROWN, OF THE DEPARTURE OF THE LADIES AT SEVEN O'CLOCK MASON WAS CONVINCED THAT SOMETHING WAS UP: KNOWING MR HARRY AS HE DID. AND HER LATE LADYSHIP AS HE HAD. HE REALLY WOULD NOT LIKE TO HAZARD AN OPINION WHAT: MR GAINSBOROUGH. HOWEVER, COULD SEE FOR HIMSELF THAT CANDLES HAD BEEN LEFT TO BURN. THEMSELVES OUT AND THAT CHINA HAD BEEN BROKEN IN THE LONG GALLERY. AVAILING HIMSELE DEXTEROLISMY OF HIS SUBORDINATE POSITION. MASON WAS OPEN TO STATE FACTS BUT RESPECTFULLY DECLINED TO DRAW INFERENCES. GAINSBOROUGH RUSHED OFF TO THE LONG GALLERY. THERE LAY HIS BIT OF CHELSEA ON THE FLOOR—UPSET, SMASHED, NOT PICKED UP! THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A CONVULSION INDEED, HE DECLARED, AS RUEFULLY AND TENDERLY he gathered the fragments.

Quite off his balance and forgetful of Perils, he ordered the Pony-Chaise and had himself driven into Blentimouth. He felt that he must tell SOMEBODY, AND BORROW SOME CONCLUSIONS—HE WAS NOT EQUAL TO making any of his own. He must carry the news.

HE DECEMED HIMSELF AND DID GROSS INJUSTICE TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
FILLINGFORD IS BUT TWELVE MILES INLAND FROM BLENTMOUTH, AND THERE ARE
THREE HOURS BETWEEN BIGHT AND ELEMEN. HE WAS MAKING FOR FAIRHOLME

POSTMAN, THE POSTMAN HAD TOLD HER, AND-WELL, SHE HAD MENTIONED IT to Mrs Trumbler. Mrs Trumbler was at Fairholme now. "Mr Tristram had been staying with you, of course? How nice to think there's no feeling of soreness!" observed Miss S. In Gainsborough at least there was no feeling save of bewilderment. "STAYING WITH US? NO. I HAVEN'T SO MUCH AS SEEN HIM." HE STAMMERED. out IMMEDIATELY MISS S. WAS UPON HIM. AND BY THE TIME THEY REACHED FAIRHOLME HAD LEET HIM WITH NO MORE THAN A FEW RAGS OF LINTOLD DETAILS. THEN WITH LINGWALLED FEERONTERY, SHE DECLARED THAT SHE HAD FORGOTTEN TO CALL AT THE GROCER'S. AND MARCHED OFF. IN AN HOUR THE NEW AND COMPLETE version of the affair was all over the town. Mrs Trumbler had got first to FAIRHOLME, BUT SHE DID NOT WREST THE LAURELS FROM MISS S.'S BROW. THE MERIE DEPARTURE FROM FILLINGFORD SHRANK TO NOTHING IN COMPARISON WITH the attendant circumstances supplied by Mr Gainsborough. "They don't know what to think at Fairholme." Mrs Trumbler reported. "I dare say not, my dear," said Miss S. grimly. "THEY WERE DINING THERE THAT VERY NIGHT, AND NOT A WORD WAS SAID ABOUT IT; AND NONE OF THEM SAW MR TRISTRAM. HE CAME QUITE SUDDENLY, and went off again with Lady Tristram." "And Mina Zabriska, my dear."

MINA COMPLICATED THE CASE. THOSE WHO WERE INCLINED TO BELIEVE, AGAINST ALL COMMON-SENSE, THAT CECLY HAD ELOPED WITH HER COUSIN—

While yet half a mile off he overtook Miss Swinkerton, heading in the same direction, ostentatiously laden with savings-bank books. With much decision she requested a lift, got in, and told him all about how Harry had escorted Cecily and Madame Zabriska from Fillingford that morning. The milkiwan had told the butcher, the butcher had told the MISS S., WOULD BE LESS SURPRISED THAN MANY OF THOSE WHO CONCEIVED. THEMSELVES TO KNOW EVERYTHING. A CECLY PARTY AND A MINA PARTY GREW UP-AND A THRD PARTY, WHO WOULD HAVE NONE OF BITHER, AND DECLARED that they had their own ideas, and that time would show. GOSSIP RAGED. AND OLD MR NEELD SAT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CONFLAGRATION. How his record of evasion, Nay, of downright falsehood, mounted up! FALSE FACTS AND FICTITIOUS REASONS FLOWED FROM HIS LIPS. THERE WAS PATHOS IN THE VALOR WITH WHICH HE MAINTAINED HIS POSITION: HE WAS HARD PRESSED, BUT HE DID NOT FALL. THERE WAS A JOY TOO IN THE FIGHT. FOR HE ALONE OF ALL BLENTWOUTH KNEW THE GREAT SECRET. AND GUESSED THAT WHAT WAS HAPPENING HAD TO DO WITH THE SECRET. HARRY HAD ASKED SILENCE FOR a week: before two days of it were gone came this news. "IF THEY DO MEAN TO BE MARRIED," SAID JANIE, "WHY COULDN'T THEY DO IT DECENTLY?" SHE MEANT WITH THE RESPECTABLE DELIBERATION OF HER OWN alliance. "Tristram's a gueer fellow." pondered Bob Broadley.

Why, in heaven's name, elope, when you have all the power and a negligible parent?—stumbled over Mina. Well then, was it with Mina Harry had eloped? Miss S. threw out hints in this direction. Why then Cecily? Miss S. was not at a loss. She said nothing, no; but if it should turn out that Ceoly's presence was secured as a protection against the wrath of Major Duplay (who. everybody knew, hated Harry), she.

"HE MAY NOT WANT TO GIVE HER TIME TO THINK. IT'S NOT A GOOD MATCH FOR her now, is it?"

"I ONLY HOPE HE ISN'T RUSHING HER INTO IT—ON PURPOSE. WHAT DO YOU

think, Mr Neeld?" "Mv dear Janie----"

"—I can't think that Harry Tristram would——"

"Well. Neeld." SAID IVER JUDICALLY. "I'M NOT SO SURE. MASTER HARRY CAN PLAY A DEEP GAME WHEN HE LIKES. I KNOW THAT VERY WELL—AND TO MY cost too " WHAT JANIE HINTED AND IVER DID NOT DISCARD WAS A VIEW WHICH FOUND. SOME SUPPORTERS: AND WHERE IT WAS ENTERTAINED, POOR MINA ZABRISKA'S CHARACTER WAS GONE, MISS S., HERSELF WAS ALL BUT CAUGHT BY THE IDEA. AND WENT SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT SHE HAD NEVER THOUGHT HIGHLY OF MADAME ZABRISKA. WHILE THE MAJOR WAS KNOWN TO BE IMPECUNIOUS. THERE WAS A NETARIOUSNESS ABOUT THE NEW SUGGESTION THAT PROVED. very attractive in Blentmouth. LATE IN THE DAY CAME FRESH TIDINGS. NEW FUEL FOR THE FLAMES. MR GAINSBOROUGH HAD DRIVEN AGAIN INTO BLENTWOUTH AND TAKEN THE TRAIN. FOR LONDON. TWO PORTIMANTEAUS AND A WICKER-CRATE, PLAUSIBLY CONJECTURED TO CONTAIN BETWEEN THEM ALL HIS WORLDLY POSSESSIONS, HAD ACCOMPANIED HIM ON THE JOURNEY. HE WAS LEAVING BLENT THEN, IF NOT FOR EVER. AT LEAST FOR A LONG WHILE. HE HAD EVADED NOTICE IN HIS USUAL FASHION, AND NEARLY DRIVEN OVER MISS S. WHEN SHE TRIED TO GET IN THE WAY, MISS S., WAS PARTLY CONSOLED BY A BIT OF LUCK THAT FOLLOWED. SHE MET MINA'S COOK, COME DOWN FROM MERRION TO BUY HOUSEHOLD STORES: HER MISTRESS WAS TO RETURN TO HER OWN HOUSE ON THE MORROW! THERE

SEEMED NO NEED TO SEARCH FOR INFERENCES. THEY LEAPT TO LIGHT. FITHER BLENT WAS TO BE SHUT UP. OR IT WAS TO RECEIVE A WEDDED PAIR. ON THIS ALTERNATIVE THE FACTIONS SPLIT. AND THE BATTLE WAS FURIOUS. MRS TRUMBLER DEFINITELY FOUGHT MISS S. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE. ON ONE POINT ONLY THE WHOLE TOWN AGREED: IT WAS BEING CHEATED—EITHER OUT OF THE WEDDING WHICH WAS ITS RIGHT, OR ELSE OUT OF THE BALL IN THE WINTER TO WHICH MISS S. HAD IRREVOCABLY COMMITTED LADY TRISTRAM. THE popularity of Blent fell to nothing in the neighborhood. THE NEXT MORNING MR NEELD GAINED THE REWARD OF VIRTUE, AND BECAME A HERO IN SPITE OF HIS DISCRETION. AT BREAKFAST HE RECEIVED A TELEGRAM. TIMES WERE CRITICAL, AND ALL EYES WERE ON HIM AS HE READ, AND RE-

- "Can you let me have a trap this afternoon, lver?"

 "Of course, of course, But you're not going to leave us. I hope?"
- THERE WAS A MOMENT'S SILENCE. GLANCES WERE EXCHANGED, WHILE

"Only just for the evening; —in fact I have to go to Blent."

read, and frowned perplexedly. Then he turned to Iver.

NELD MADE HALF-HEARTED EFFORTS TO GRAPPLE WITH AN EGG. THEN BOB Broadley broke out with a laugh,

"Oh. hang it all, out with it. Mr Neeld!"

"WELL. I'M NOT TOLD TO BE SLENT; AND IT MUST BECOME KNOWN

- •
- IMMEDIATELY. MADAME ZABRISKA TELEGRAPHS TO ME THAT THEY ARE TO BE MARRIED EARLY THIS MORNING, AND WILL COME TO BLENT BY THE 1.30 TRAIN. SHE HERSELF LEAVES BY THE 11 O'CLOCK, WILL BE THERE AT FIVE, AND WISHES me to join her."
- "By Jove, he's done it then!" exclaimed Iver.

EVERYBODY LOOKED VERY SOLEMN EXCEPT NEELD, WHO WAS SADLY confused.

"Dear, dear!" murmured Mrs Iver.

"She must be very much in love with him," remarked Janie.

"It's HIS CONDUCT MORE THAN HERS WHICH NEEDS EXPLANATION," MER

OBSERVED DRYLY. "AND WHAT DO THEY WANT YOU FOR, NEELD?" IF HIS TONE AND HIS QUESTION WERE NOT VERY FLATTERING, THEY WERE EXCUSED BY THE OBVIOUS FACT THAT THERE WAS NO SORT OF REASON FOR WANTING MR NEELD—

or at any rate seemed to all that party to be none.

"OH—ER—WHY—WHY NO DOUBT IT'S—IT'S ONLY A FANCY OF MINA Zabriska's." annoving that old Mr Neeld should be the person wanted at Blent. "I'll drive you over." Bob kindly volunteered. "Er-thank you. Broadley, but she asks me to come alone."

"A VERY QUEER FANCY." SAID JANIE IVER COLDLY. IT WAS REALLY A LITTLE

"WELL. I'M HANGED!" MUTTERED BOB, WHO HAD SEEN A CHANCE OF BEING IN at the death.

THEY WERE COMING STRAIGHT DOWN TO BLENT. THAT FACT ASSLMED AN IMPORTANT PLACE IN NET D'S REVIEW OF THE SITUATION. AND HIS PRESENCE

WAS REQUESTED. HE PUT THESE TWO THINGS TOGETHER. THEY MUST MEAN THAT THE SECRET WAS TO BE TOLD THAT EVENING AT BLENT, AND THAT HE WAS TO BE VOUCHED AS EVIDENCE. IF BY CHANCE CECILY ASKED FOR IT. ON THE VERY

DAY OF THE WEDDING THE TRUTH WAS TO BE REVEALED. IN IGNORANCE. PERHAPS IN HER OWN DESPITE. SHE HAD BEEN MADE IN REALITY WHAT SHE HAD CONCEVED HERSELF TO BE TO-DAY SHE WAS LADY TRISTRAM IN LAW. Now she was to be told. Neeld saw the choice that would be laid BEFORE HER. AND. AT THE SAME TIME. THE USE THAT HAD BEEN MADE OF HIS

SILENCE, HE FELL INTO A SORE PUZZLE, YES, HARRY COULD PLAY A DEEP GAME. when he chose. "It's oute impossible to justify either the use he's made of me or the WAY HE'S TREATED HER." HE CONCLUDED SADLY. "I SHALL SPEAK VERY SERIOUSLY TO HIM ABOUT IT." BUT HE KNEW THAT THE SERIOUS SPEAKING.

HOWEVER COMFORTING IT MIGHT BE TO HIMSELF AS A PROTEST, WOULD FALL VERY LIGHTLY ON HARRY TRISTRAM'S EARS: THEIR LISTENING WOULD BE FOR THE VERDICT of another voice. "Do you think Disney will repeat his offer-will give him a chance of

RECONSIDERING NOW?" ASKED IVER. WHO HAD HEARD OF THAT AFFAIR FROM

Lord Southend. "I'M SURE HE WOULDN'T ACCEPT ANYTHING," NEELD AN SWERED WITH

REMARKABLE PROMPTITUDE AND CONVICTION. IT WAS A LUXURY TO FIND AN

"The least he could do would be to leave that to her."
"SHE'D SAY JUST THE SAME," NEELD ASSURED HIM "I'M CONVINCED THERE'LL
be no question of anything of the kind."

"Then it's very awkward," Iver grumbled crossly.

REMEMBERED, A GOOD DEAL OF PLAIN-SPEAKING AND ONE BIMBRACE— NEELD HAD NEVER FOUND HER IN SUCH A STATE AS GOVERNED HER THS

IN ALL HIS VARIED EXPERIENCE OF THE IMP-WHICH INCLUDED. IT MAY BE

EVENING. MASON GAVE HIM TEA WHILE SHE WALKED RESTLESSLY ABOUT; HE
GATHERED THAT MASON WAS DYING TO TALK BUT HAD BEEN SORE WOUNDED IN
AN ENCOLNTER WITH MINA ALREADY. AND WAS NOW PERFORCE HOLDING HIS

"THEY'LL BE HERE BY SEVEN, AND YOU AND I ARE TO DINE WITH THEM," SHE told him. "Quite informally."

"Dear me, I—I don't think I want——" he began.
"Hush!" she interrupted. "Are you going to be all day with those things,

Mason?"
"I HOPE I HAVEN'T BEEN SLOWER THAN USUAL, MA'AM," SAID MASON VERY
STIFFIN.

AT LAST HE WENT. IN AN INSTANT MINA DARRED ACROSS TO NEELD, AND CAUGHT him by the arm. "What have you to tell me?" she cried.

"To tell you? I? Oh, dear, no, Madame Zabriska! I assure you——"

"OH, THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT! HARRY SAID YOU WERE TO TELL ME BEFORE they arrived; that's why I sent for you now."

"He said I was to tell you——?"

opportunity of speaking the truth.

tonque.

explain it all."

She stood before him with clashed hands. "It's Quite true, he did say so," she rleaded. "It's all been so delichtful, and yet so strance; and he told me to be ready either to stay here or to go home to-nicht! Tell

"YES, YES, SOMETHING YOU KNEW AND I DIDN'T: SOMETHING THAT WOULD

"Why didn't he tell you himself?"
"I ONLY SAW HM ALONE FOR AN INSTANT AFTER THE WEDDING: AND BEFORE IT HE

me, tell me. Mr Neeld!"

DIDN'T SAY A WORD ABOUT THERE BEING ANYTHING TO TELL. THERE'S A SECRET.
What is it?"

He was glad to tell it. He had carried his burden long enough.

"We've all made a great blunder. Harry is Lord Tristram after all."

MINA STOOD SILENT FOR A MOMENT. "OH!" SHE GASPED. "AND HE'S MARRIED
Cecily without telling her?"

"THAT'S WHAT HE HAS DONE. I REGRET TO SAY, AND I TAKE IT THAT HE MEANS

to tell her to-night."

May convento a chara "Munitary of Exp. 2" CLE MARA DEL "Munitary of Exp. 2" CLE MARA

Mina sank into a chair. "What will she do?" she murwured. "What will she do?"

"THERE WAS A MSTAKE—OR RATHER A FRAUD—ABOUT THE DATE OF SIR RANDOLPH EDGE'S DEATH; HIS BROTHER KNEW IT. I'LL TELL YOU THE DETAILS IF YOU LIKE BUT THAT'S THE END AND THE SUM OF IT. AS TO WHY HE DIDN'T TELL—er—his wife sooner, perhaps you know better than I."

er—nis wite sooner, pernaps you know detter than i."

"YES, I KNOW THAT," SHE SAID. AND THEN—IT WAS MOST INCONSIDERATE,

MOST PAINFUL TO MR NEELD—SHE BEGAN TO CRY. UNABLE TO BEAR THIS

CLIMAX OF EXCITEMENT COMING ON THE TOP OF HER TWO DAYS' EMOTION, SHE SOBBED HYSTERICALLY. "THEY'LL BE HERE AT SEVEN!" SHE MOANED. "WHAT

WILL HAPPEN? OH, MR NEELD! AND I KNOW HE'LL EXPECT ME TO BE CALMAND

—and to carry it off—and be composed. How can I be?" "PERHAPS A GLASS OF SHERRY ——?" WAS MR NEELD'S NOT UNREASONABLE suagestion. No. THE OLD BROWN WOULD NOT SERVE HERE. BUT WITHOUT ITS AID A SUDDEN. CHANGE CAME OVER MINA. SHE SPRANG TO HER FEET AND LEFT THE TEARS TO roll down her cheeks untended as she cried. "What a splendid thing to do! Oh, how like Harry! And it's to be settled to-night! What can we do to make it go right?" "I INTEND TO TAKE NO RESPONSIBILITY AT ALL." PROTESTED NEELD. "I'M HERE TO speak to the facts if I'm wanted, but----" "Oh, BOTHER THE FACTS! WHAT ARE WE TO DO TO MAKE HER TAKE IT PROPERLY?" SHE GAVE ANOTHER SOB. "OH, I'M AN IDIOT!" SHE CRIED. "Haven't you anything to suggest, Mr Neeld?" He shrugged his shoulders peevishly. Her spirits fell again. "I SEE! YES, IF SHE—IF SHE DOESN'T TAKE IT PROPERLY, HE'LL GO AWAY AGAIN. AND I'M TO BE READY TO STAY HERE." ANOTHER CHANGE IN THE BAROWETER came in a flash, "But she can't help being Lady Tristram now!" "It's all a most unjustifiable proceeding. He tricks the girl——" "Yes, he had to. That was the only chance, If he'd told her before——" "But isn't she in love with him?" "OH. YOU DON'T KNOW THE TRISTRAMS! OH, WHAT ARE WE TO DO?" SAVE RUNNING THROUGH EVERY KIND AND DEGREE OF EMOTION MINA SEEMED TO find nothing to do. "AND I'M BOUND TO SAY THAT I CONSIDER OUR POSITION MOST. EMBARRASSING." MR NEELD SPOKE WITH SOME WARMTH, WITH SOME EXCUSE TOO PERHAPS. TO WELCOME A NEWLY MARRIED COUPLE HOME MAY

BE THOUGHT ALWAYS TO REQUIRE SOME TACT: WHEN IT IS A TOSS-UP WHETHER THEY WILL NOT PART AGAIN FOR EVER LINDER YOLR VERY EYES THE SITUATION IS NOT IMPROVED. Such TRIALS SHOULD NOT BE INFLICTED ON QUIET OLD bachelors: Josiah Cholderton had not done with his editor vet.

"We must treat it as a mere triple," The IMP an NOUNCED, FIXING ON THE THING WHICH ABOVE ALL OTHERS SHE COULD NOT ACHIEVE. YET HER MANNER

WAS SO CONFIDENT THAT NEELD GASPED. "AND IF THAT DOESN'T DO. WE MUST TELL HER THAT THE HAPPINESS OF HER WHOLE LIFE DEPENDS ON WHAT SHE DOES to-night." Variety of treatment was evidently not to be lacking.

"I INTEND TO TAKE NO RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY KIND. HE'S GOT HIMSELF INTO A scrape. Let him get out of it." persisted Neeld.

"I may be excused if I consider the lady a little too."

"I suppose I don't care for Cecily? Do you mean that, Mr Neeld?"

"My dear friend, need we guarrel too?"

"I thought you were his friend?"

"DON'T BE STUPID. WHO'S QUARRELLING? I NEVER KNEW ANYBODY SO USELESS AS YOU ARE. CAN'T YOU DO ANYTHING BUT SIT THERE AND TALK ABOUT RESPONSIBILITIES?" SHE WAS RANGING ABOUT. A DIMINUTIVE TIGER OF UNUSUALLY ACTIVE HABITS. SHE HAD WANDERED ROUND THE ROOM AGAIN. before she burst out:

"Oh, but it's something to see the end of it!"

THAT WAS HIS FEELING TOO, HOWEVER MUCH HE MIGHT REBUKE HIMSELF FOR IT. HUMAN LIFE AT FIRST-HAND HAD NOT BEEN TOO PLENTIFUL WITH HIM. THE IMP'S EXCTEMENT INFECTED HIM. "AND HE'S BACK HERE AFTER ALL!" SHE CRIED. "AT

"Yes, it's past seven," said he.

least—Heavens, they'll be here directly. Mr Neeld!"

"COME INTO THE GARDEN. WE'LL WAIT FOR THEM ON THE BRIDGE." SHE TURNED. TO HIM AS THEY PASSED THROUGH THE HALL. "WOULDN'T YOU LIKE SOMETHING of this sort to happen to you?" she asked. No. He was perturbed enough as a spectator: He would not have been himself engaged in the play. "Why ISN'T EVERYBODY HERE?" SHE DEMANDED, WITH A LALIGH THAT WAS AGAIN NERVOUS AND ALMOST HYSTERICAL. "WHY ISN'T ADDIE TRISTRAM HERE? Ah, and your old Cholderton?"

MINA LOOKED HARD AT HIM. "SHE SHALL DO RIGHT." SHE SAID. "AND HARRY shall not go."

"Hark, I hear wheels on the road," said Mr Neeld.

"Surely they'll make the best of a----?" "OH, WE'RE NOT TALKING OF YOUR IVERS AND YOUR BROADLEYS!" SHE

INTERRUPTED INDIGNANTLY. "IF THEY WERE LIKE THAT, WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE been where we are at all." How true it was, how lamentably true! One had to presuppose Addie

TRISTRAM, AND TURNS OF FORTUNE OR OF CHANCE WAYWARD AS ADDIE HERSELF —and to reckon with the same blood, now in young and living veins. "I can't bear it," whispered Mina.

"He'll expect you to be calm and composed," Neeld reminded her. "Then give me a cigarette," she implored despairingly.

"I am not a smoker." said Mr Neeld.

"OH, YOU REALLY ARE THE VERY LAST MAN ——! WELL, COME ON THE BRIDGE." groaned Mina.

THEY WAITED ON THE BRIDGE, AND THE WHEELS DREW NEAR. THEY SPOKE NO

down the road.

There they sat, side by side. Cecily was leaning forward, her eyes
were eager, and there was a bright touch of color on her checks;
Harry leant back, looking at her, not at Blent. He wore a quiet smile;

MORE. THEY HAD FOUND NOTHING TO DO. THEY COULD ONLY WAIT. A FLY CAME

ASSISTED CEOLLY TO ALIGHT. IN A MOMENT SHE WAS IN MINA'S ARMS. THE
NEXT, SHE RECOGNIZED NEELD'S PRESENCE WITH A LITTLE CRY OF SURPRISE. AT
A LOSS TO ACCOUNT FOR HINSELF, THE OLD MAN STOOD THERE IN EMBARRASSED
WIRETCHEDINESS.

his air was very calm. He saw Mina and Neeld, and waved his hand to

"I WANT YOU TO WAIT," SAID HARRY TO THE DRIVER. "PUT UP IN THE STABLES, AND THEY'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO EAT. YOU MUST WAIT TILL I SEND YOU WORD."

"WAIT? WHY IS HE TO WAIT, HARRY?" ASKED CECLY. HER TONE WAS GAY; SHE WAS OVERFLOWING WITH JOY AND MERRIMENT. "WHO'S GOING AWAY? OH, is it you, Mr Neeld?"

"I—I have a trap from Mr Iver's," he stammered.
"I MAY WANT TO SEND A MESSAGE," HARRY EXPLAINED. "KIND OF YOU TO come. Mr Neeld."

"I—I must wish you joy," said Neeld, taking refuge in conventionality.

"WE'VE HAD A CAPITAL JOURNEY DOWN, HAVEN'T WE, CEOLY? AND I'M awfully hungry. What time is it?"

Mason was rubbing his hands in the doorway.

"Dinner's ordered at eight, sir," said he.

"And it's half-past seven now. Just time to wash our hands. No dress to-night, you know."

A GLANCE FROM HARRY MADE THE IMP EXCUSE HERSELF. "I'LL KEEP MR NEELD company," she said.

"I'll go to my room," said Cecily. "Will you come with me, Mina?"

Cecily turned to her husband. She smiled and blushed a little.
"I'll take you as far as your room." said he.

CHAIR IN THE HALL. MASON PASSED BY, CHUCKLING TO HIMSELF; NEELD LOOKED harmless, and he dared to speak to him.

"WELL. THIS IS THE NEXT BEST THING TO MR HARRY COMING BACK TO HIS OWN.

MINA AND NEELD WATCHED THEM GO UPSTAIRS: THEN EACH DROPPED INTO A

sir," said he. That was it. That was the feeling. Mason had got it!

"I'm glad of it after all," Neeld confessed to Mina.

"WAIT, WAIT!" SHE URGED, SITTING STRAIGHT IN HER CHAIR, AFFARENTLY
LISTENING FOR ANY SOUND. HER CEVIOUS ANXIETY EXTENDED ITS CONTAGION TO
him; he understood better how nice the issue was.

nim; ne understood better now nice the issue was.
"Will you come in the Garden with me after dinner?" Asked Harry, as
Cecily and he went upstairs.

"No, directly. I want to say a word to you."

"Of course—when they've gone."

"WE MUST ESCAPE THEN!" SHE LAUGHED. "OH, WELL, THEY'LL EXPECT THAT, I suppose." Her delight in her love bubbled over in her laugh.

They came to the door of her room, and she stopped.

"HERE?" ASKED HARRY, "YES, IT WAS MY MOTHER'S ROOM, YOU REIGN NOW

"HERE?" ASKED HARRY. "YES, IT WAS MY MOTHER'S R in mv mother's stead." SHE LAUGHED AGAIN AND BLUSHED AS SHE OPENED THE DOOR AND STOOD holding the handle.

"WON'T YOU COME IN-JUST FOR A MINUTE. HARRY? I-I HAVEN'T CHANGED.

HIS VOICE HAD A RING OF TRILINDH IN IT. HE KISSED HER HAND. "DINNER AS

soon as vou're ready." said he.

this room at all."

And now she was refused.

"All is yours to change or to keep unchanged," said he.

"OH, I'VE NO REASON FOR CHANGING ANYTHING NOW. EVERYTHING'S TO BE PUT BACK IN THE LONG GALLERY!" SHE PAUSED, AND THEN SAID AGAIN, "WON'T you come in for just a minute, Harry?"

"I must go back to our friends downstairs." he answered.

THE PRETEXT WAS THREADBARE. WHAT DID THE GUESTS MATTER? THEY WOULD DO WELL ENOUGH. IT HAD COST HER SOMETHING TO ASK—A LITTLE EFFORT—SINCE. THE RECOURST STILL SEEWED SO STRANGE. SINCE ITS RUEASURE HAD A FEAR IN IT.

"I ask you," she said, with a sudden haughtiness. HE STOOD LOOKING AT HER A MOMENT. THERE WAS A BRISK STEP ALONG THE

Corridor.

"Oh, I beg your Ladyshe's Pardon, I didn't know your Ladyshe had

come upstairs." It was Cecily's maid.
"In ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES," SAID HARRY WITH A NOD. SLOWLY CEOLY followed the maid inside

AFTER HE HAD WASHED HS HANDS HARRY REJOINED HS FRIENDS. THEY WERE still sitting in the hall with an air of expectancy.

still sitting in the hall with an air of expectancy. "YOU/VE TOLD HER?" CRED MINA. "OH. YES. MR NEELD HAS TOLD ME. everything." "Well. I've mentioned the bare fact----" Neeld began. "YES, YES, THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS, YOU'VE TOLD HER, HARRY?" The last two days made him "Harry" and her "Mina." "No. I HAD A CHANCE AND I—FUNKED IT." SAID HARRY, SLOW IN SPEECH AND slow in smile. "She asked me into her room, Well, I wouldn't go." He laughed as he spoke, laughed rather scornfully. "It's rather absurd. I shall be all right after dinner," he added, laughing still. "Or would you like to do the job for me. Mina?" THE IMP SHOOK HER HEAD WITH IMMENSE DETERMINATION. "I'LL THROW myself into the Blent if you like." she said. "What about you, Mr Neeld?" "My DEAR FRIEND, OH, MY DEAR FRIEND!" UNDISGUISED PANIC TOOK POSSESSION OF MR NEELD. HE TRIED TO COVER IT BY SAYING STERNLY, "THIS-ER-PREPOSTEROUS POSITION IS ENTIRELY YOUR OWN FAULT. YOU KNOW. YOU have acted----" "Yes, I know," nodded Harry, not impatiently but with a sombre assent. HE ROUSED HIMSELF THE NEXT MOMENT, SAYING, "WELL, SOMEBODY'S GOT TO bell the cat, you know." "REALLY IT'S NOT MY BUSINESS." PROTESTED NEELD AND MINA IN ONE BREATH. both laughing nervously. "You like the fun, but you don't want any of the work," remarked Harry. THAT WAS TRUE TRUE TO THEIR DISGRACE. THEY BOTH FELT THE REPROACH. HOW

WERE THEY BETTER THAN THE REST OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD, WHO WERE CONTENT
TO GOSSIP AND GAPE AND TAKE THE FORTUNES OF THE TRISTRAMS AS MERE
matter for their own entertainment?

"I'VE MADE YOU LOOK ASHAMED OF YOURSELVES NOW," HE LAUGHED. "WELL, I
MUST DO THE THING MYSELF, I SUPPOSE. WHAT A PITY MISS SWINKERTON ISN'T
here!"

CECILY CAME DOWN. SHE PASSED HARRY WITH A RATHER DISTANT AIR AND

took Neeld's arm. "They say dinner's ready," said she. "Mina, will you come with Harry?"

Harry sank into the chair opposite Cecily—and opposite the picture of ADDE TRISTRAM ON THE WALL. "WELL, SOMEHOW I'VE MANAGED TO GET BACK here." said he.

THE SHADOW HAD PASSED FROM CEOLY'S FACE. SHE LOOKED AT HIM.

"At a terrible price, poor Harry?" she said.

"At a big price." he answered.

blushing and laughing.

from the table.

SHE LOOKED ROUND AT THE THREE. HARRY WAS COMPOSED, BUT THERE WAS no mistaking the perturbation of the Imp and Mr Neeld.

"A BIG FRICE?" SHE ASKED WONDERINGLY. "ISN'T THAT A QUEER COMPLIMENT, HARRY?" THEN A LIGHT SEEMED TO BREAK IN ON HER, AND SHE CRIED: "YOU MEAN THE COST OF YOUR PRIDE? I SHOULD NEVER LET THAT STAND BETWEEN YOU and me!"

"WILL YOU MAKE A NOTE OF THAT ADMISSION, MINA?" SAID HARRY WITH A SMILE. "BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T SAY SO ALWAYS, CECILY. DO YOU RECOLLECT WHAT YOU ONCE SAID? "IF EVER THE TIME COMES, I SHALL REMEMBER!" THAT WAS WHAT YOU SAID."

SHE LOOKED AT HIM WITH A GLANCE THAT WAS SUDDENLY TROUBLED. THERE seemed a meaning in his words. She pushed back her chair and rose

"I don't want dinner. I'm going into the garden," she said.
They sat still as she went out. Harry refolded his narkin and slowly rose to his feet. "I should have liked it better after dinner," he observed.
Mina and Mr Neeld sat on.
"Are we to dine?" whispered Neeld. There is the body, after all.
"Oh, yes, sir," came in Mason's soothing tones over his shoulder. "We never waited for her late Ladyship." And he handed soup.
"Really Mason is rather a comfort," thought Mr Neeld. The Imp drank a glass of champagne.

XXIX

The Curmudgeon

IN HIS MOST BUSINESS-LIKE TONES, WITH NO MORE GESTURE THAN A POINTING OF HIS FINGER NOW AND THEN, OR AN OCCASIONAL WAVE OF HIS HAND, HARRY DETAILED THE CIRCUMSTANCES. HE WAS METHODICAL AND ACCURATE, HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN OPENING A CASE IN THE LAW-COURTS, AND WOULD HAVE EARNED A COMPLIMENT ON HIS LUCIDITY. THERE WAS SOMETHING LUCICROUS IN THIS TREATMENT OF THE MATTER, BUT HE REMAINED VERY GRAVE, ALTHOUGH quite unemotional.

"WHAT WAS MY POSITION THEN?" HE ASKED. "I REMEMBERED WHAT YOU'D SAID. I SAW THE PULL I'D GIVEN YOU. IF I'D TOLD YOU BEFORE, YOU'D HAVE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ME. YOU'D HAVE TAKEN A TRAGIC DELIGHT IN COING BACK to your little house. I should have given you your revenge."

"So you cheated me? It shows the sort of person you are!"

He went on as though he had not heard her indignant ejaculation.

"I HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH YOU—WITH YOU AND WITH THE IDEA OF YOUR BEING HERE. I COULDN'T HAVE ANYBODY ELSE AT BLENT, AND I HAD TO HAVE YOU. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO TURN YOU OUT. I DON'T THINK IT WOULD HAVE BEEN gentlemanly."

"It was more gentlemanly to marry me on false pretences?"

"WELL, PERHAPS NOT, BUT A FORM OF UNCENTLEWANLINESS LESS REPULSIVE TO ME—OH, JUST TO ME PERSONALLY. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU QUITE UNDERSTAND YET WHY I GAVE UP BLENT TO YOU. JUST THE SAME FEELING HAS

with you now."
"I don't believe it, or you'd have trusted me—trusted my love for you."

MADE ME DO THIS-WITH THE ADDITION. OF COURSE, THAT I'M MORE IN LOVE

"I've trusted it enormously—trusted it to forgive me this deceit."

"If you had come and told me——"

"At the very best you'd have taken months."

"And you couldn't wait for me?"

"Well, waiting's a thing I detest."

mv flv."

explained.

night."
"No, no, that's not it." Harry did not want the arrangement msunderstood. "If we can't agree, I go back to town—not you. I kept

"OH, I'VE MADE UP MY MIND," SHE DECLARED, "I SHALL GO BACK TO TOWN TO-

"You needn't make fun of it anyhow."

"I'M NOT. I'M QUITE SERIOUS. YOU STAY HERE, I GO AWAY. I ACCEPT THIS POST ABROAD—THE ARBITRATION BUSINESS. I'VE GOT TO SEND AN ANSWER ABOUT IT to-morrow."

"No, I shall go. I'm resolved upon it. I won't stay here."
"THEN WE MUST SHUT THE PLACE UP, OR PULL IT DOWN," SAID HARRY. "IT WILL
LOOK ABSURD, BUT-WELL, WE NEVER CONSIDER THE NEIGHBORS." FOR THE
FIRST TIME HE SEEMED VEXED. "I DID COUNT ON YOUR STAYING HERE," HE

"I can never forgive you for deceiving me."

"You said you wouldn't let your pride stand between us."

vou'll stoop to do, to gain---!" "What have I gained yet?" He asked. "Only what you choose to give me now!"

"It'S NOT MY PRIDE. It'S-It'S THE REVELATION OF WHAT YOU ARE, AND WHAT

SHE LOOKED AT HIM FOR A MOMENT. THE LITTLE SCENE IN THE CORRIDOR

upstairs came back to her. So that was the meaning of it! "I'VE TAKEN YOUR EREFTOM EROM YOU. THAT'S TRUE, IN RETURN I'VE GIVEN YOU.

Blent I did the best I could " "Oh. DO YOU REALLY DELUDE YOURSELF LIKE THAT? WHAT YOU DID WAS UTTER. selfishness "

"VERY WELL." HE SAID. "WE'LL AGREE ON THAT. THERE'S BEEN A REVELATION OF what I am. I don't—I distinctly don't justify myself. It was a lie, a fraud." "Yes." said Cecily, in a low but emphatic assent.

Harry sighed. They were not getting on prosperously.

give or refuse it. I admit it all." "AND IT HAS BROUGHT US TO THIS!" SHE ROSE AS SHE SPOKE, A PICTURE OF indignation. "There's no use talking any more about it." said she.

"I GAINED YOUR CONSENT BY A TRICK, WHEN YOU OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN FREE TO

HE LOOKED AT HER LONG AND DELIBERATELY. HE SEEMED TO WEIGH SOMETHING IN HIS MIND. TO ASK WHETHER HE SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT SAY

somethina. "And you conclude that the sort of person I amisn't fit to live with?" He

asked at last.

"I'VE TOLD YOU WHAT I'VE MADE UP MY MIND TO DO. I CAN'T HELP WHETHER you stay or go too. But I'm going away from here, and going alone." "Yes. If you like to put it that way, yes."

"VERY WELL. BUT BEFORE YOU GO, A WORD ABOUT YOU! SIT DOWN, RLEASE"

SHE OBEYED HS RATHER IMPERATIVE GESTURE. "I'VE BEEN MEEK," HE

SMILED. "I'VE ADMITTED ALL YOU SAID ABOUT ME. AND NOW, RLEASE, A WORD

about you!"

"ABOUT ME? WHAT IS THERE TO SAY ABOUT ME? OH, YOU'RE GOING BACK TO
that old story about my pride again!"

ONCE MORE HE LOOKED LONG AT HER FACE. IT WAS FLUSHED. AND REBELLIOUS, IT
gave no hint of yielding to any weapon that he had yet employed.

"I'M NOT GOING TO SPEAK OF YOUR PRIDE. BUT OF YOUR INCREDIBLE

"Because I'm that sort of person?"

meanness." said he.

the Tristrams."

"Perhaps you'll explain yourself," she said, relapsing into cold disdain, and leaning back again.

"I WILL. I MEAN TO. JUST LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF THE WHOLE AFFAIR." HE ROSE

AND STOOD OPPOSITE HER, CONSTRAINING HER TO LOOK AT HIM, ALTHOUGH HER ATTITUDE PROFESSED A LOFTY INDIFFERENCE. "HERE WAS I—IN POSSESSION! I

"What?" cried Cecily, rudely startled and sitting bolt upright.
"THERE'S NO HARM IN FLAIN SPEAKING, SINCE WE'RE GOING TO PART. OF YOUR
EXTRAORDINARY MEANNESS. CECILY—AND REALLY IT'S NOT GENERALLY A FALLT OF

WAS SAFE, I KNEW I WAS SAFE, I WAS AS CONVINCED OF MY SAFETY AS I AM
EVEN NOW—WHEN IT'S BEYOND QUESTION. WAS I FRIGHTENED? ASK MINA,
ASK DUPLAY. THEN YOU CAME. YOU KNOW WHAT I DID. FOR YOUR SAKE,
BECAUSE YOU WERE WHAT YOU ARE, BECAUSE I HAD BEGUN TO LOVE YOU—
YES. THAT'S THE TRUTH OF IT—I GAVE IT ALL TO YOU. NOT THIS PLACE ONLY. BUT ALL I

YES, THAT'S THE TRUTH OF IT—I GAVE IT ALL TO YOU. NOT THIS PLACE ONLY, BUT ALL I HAD. EVEN MY NAME—EVEN MY RIGHT TO BEAR ANY NAME. NOBODY AND nameless. I went out of this house for you." "What ought you to have felt. What ought you to have prayed then?" He ASKED. "SURELY THAT IT SHOULD COME BACK TO ME. THAT IT SHOULD BE MINE again?"

He paused a little, took a pace on the grass, and returned to her.

"I DID." SHE PROTESTED. STIRRED TO SELF-DEFENCE. "I WAS MISERABLE. YOU

TO ME. DID YOU WANT, DID YOU PRAY, THAT IT MIGHT BE MINE AGAIN BY NO

KNOW I WAS. I COULDN'T STAY HERE FOR THE THOUGHT OF YOU. I CAME TO London, I came to you, Harry, I offered it to you," "It's you who are deceiving yourself now. Yes, you came and offered it

GIFT OF YOURS BUT BY RIGHT? DID YOU PRAY THAT THE THING SHOULD HAPPEN WHICH HAS HAPPENED NOW? THAT YOU SHOULD BE TURNED OUT AND LISHOULD BE PUT IN? BACK IN MY OWN PLACE, MY PROPER PLACE? THAT I SHOULD BE Tristram of Blent again? Did you pray for that?"

HE PAUSED, BUT SHE SAID NOTHING. HER FACE WAS TROUBLED NOW AND HER eves could not leave his.

"YOU WERE READY TO PLAY LADY BOUNTIFUL TO ME. TO GIVE OF YOUR CHARITY. TO MAKE YOURSELF FEEL VERY NOBLE. THAT WAS IT. AND NOW ----" HIS VOICE

BECAME MORE VEHEMENT, "AND NOW, LOOK INTO YOUR HEART, LOOK CLOSE! LOOK, LOOK! WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART NOW? YOU SAY I'VE CHEATED YOU. IT'S true. Is that why you're angry, is that why you won't live with me? No, by heaven, not that, or anything of the kind! Will you have the truth?" Again she made no answer. She waited for his words.

"ARE YOU REJOICED THAT MINE'S MY OWN AGAIN, THAT I'M BACK IN MY PLACE. THAT I'M TRISTRAM OF BLENT, THAT IT BELONGS TO ME? THAT I TAKE IT BY MY

OWN INCONTESTABLE RIGHT AND NOT OF YOUR HAND. BY YOUR BOUNTY AND YOUR

CHARITY? ARE YOU SO REJOICED AT THAT THAT YOU CAN FORGIVE ME ANYTHING. FORGIVE THE MAN YOU LOVE ANYTHING? YES, YOU DO LOVE ME-YOU'RE WELCOME TO THAT, IF YOU THINK IT MAKES IT ANY BETTER. IT SEEMS TO ME TO

man you love! Why not? I'll tell you why! Shall I? Shall I go on?" She bowed her head and clasped her hands together. "YOU HATE MY HAVING COME TO MY OWN AGAIN. YOU HATE ITS BEING MINE BY RIGHT AND NOT BY YOUR BOUNTY. YOU HATE BEING LADY TRISTRAM ONLY BECAUSE I'VE CHOSEN TO MAKE YOU SO. AND BECAUSE YOU HATE THAT. YOU won't forgive me, and you say you won't live with me. Yes, you're angry BECAUSE I'VE COME TO MY OWN AGAIN. YOU HATE IT. LOOK IN YOUR HEART, I sav. and tell me that what I sav isn't true. if you can." SHE MADE NO ANSWER STILL. HE CAME A STEP CLOSER AND SMOTE HIS FIST. on the palm of his other hand, as he ended: "YOU CALLED ME A LIAR. I WAS A LIAR, BUT, BY GOD, YOU'RE A CURMUDGEON. Cecilv!" FOR A MOMENT LONGER SHE LOOKED AT HIM. AS HE STOOD THERE IN HIS. SCORNELL ANGER. THEN WITH A LOW MOAN SHE HID HER FACE IN HER HANDS.

MAKE IT WORSE. NO, YOU CAN'T FORGIVE ME ANYTHING, YOU CAN'T FORGIVE THE

MINA AND NEELD—NOW AT THEIR SWEETS—HEARD HIS STEP AND EXCHANGED EXCITED GLANCES. HE WALKED UP TO THE HEAD OF THE TABLE, TO CECLY'S CHAIR. PLUMPED DOWN INTO IT, AND CALLED OUT TO MASON,

THE NEXT MINUTE HE TURNED ON HIS HEEL. LEFT HER WHERE SHE SAT. AND

strode off into the house.

"Something to eat and some champagne."

"Yes, sir," said Mason in a flurry.

"Он, ву-тне-вуе, you can say 'му Lord' again. The Lawyers вциоденер, and there's been a mistake."

and there's been a mistake."

The astonished Mason began to express felicitations. Harry was

petulantly short with him.

"OH, SHUT UP THAT, MY DEAR MAN, AND GIVE ME SOME CHAMPAGNE." HE

"WELL, I'M HUNGRY ANYHOW," AND HE FELL TO ON HS BEEF, HAVING WAVED soup and fish aside impatiently. "Tell them all downstairs what I've told YOU, MASON, BUT FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE DON'T LET THERE BE ANY FUSS. OH, AND I suppose you'd better keep something hot for Lady Tristram."

MASON'S EXIT WAS HASTENED BY THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF HS COMMISSION.
The moment he was gone Mina broke out:

"Where's Cecily?"

"I left her on the lawn," said Harry, frowning hard but eating heartily.

"You've told her?"

DRANK A GLASS OFF AND THEN OBSERVED. "I HOPE YOU TWO HAVE HAD A

decent dinner?" He had the manner of a host now.
"I—I hadn't much appetite." stammered Neeld.

"Yes. I've told her."

perturbation.

.
"LOOK HERE, MINA, MCHTIN'T YOU GO AND ASK HER? IT'S A LONG STORY, AND
I'm deuced hungry, you know."

MINA NEEDED NO FURTHER PERMISSION. SHE ROSE AND FLEW. NEELD, THOUGH

"And what did she say?" The Imp's utterance was jerky from her

UNCERTAIN WHAT WAS EXPECTED OF HIM, SAT ON, NERVOUSLY EATING GOOSEBERRIES—A FRUIT WHICH RARELY AGREED WITH HIM. HARRY DRANK A SECOND GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE AND HIS BROW RELAXED, ALTHOUGH HE WAS Still though this.

still thoughtful.
"I—I hope all has gone well?" Neeld ventured to inquire.

"I SCARCELY KNOW. THE INTERVIEW TOOK RATHER AN UNEXPECTED TURN." HE SPOKE AS THOUGH THE DEVELOPMENT HAD SURPRISED HIM AND HE COULD HARDLY TRACE HOW IT HAD COME ABOUT. "THE WHOLE THING WILL BE SETTLED

more good than those gooseberries." Neeld laid a ready hand on the decanter, as he asked. "Is—er—Lady Tristram not coming in to dinner?" "REALLY I DON'T KNOW. SHE DIDN'T MENTION IT." HIS THOUGHTS SEEMED FISHWHERE "WAS I WRONG TO THIL MASON TO GIVE METHETITLE?" HE ASKED. "Ought I to wait till I've formally established my claim?" "Since it's quite alear, and there's no opposition from-from the DISPOSSESSED CLAIMANT ---" NEELD SMILED FEEBLY AND SIPPED HIS port. "THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT: AND IT'S AS WELL TO PUT THINGS ON A PERWANENT BASIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WHEN ONCE THAT'S DONE, WE SHALL THINK LESS about all this troublesome affair." He sat silent for a few minutes, while NEELD FINISHED HIS WINE, "I'M GOING TO HAVE SOME CHEESE, DON'T YOU wait. Mr Neeld." OLD NEELD WAS GLAD TO ESCAPE: HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HIS HOST'S. MOOD AND WAS LINEASY IN TALK WITH HIM. MOREOVER IT SEEMED THAT THE GREAT OLESTION WAS BEING DECIDED IN THE CARDEN AND NOT IN THE DININGroom. To the garden then he betook himself. HARRY SMOKED A CIGARETTE WHEN HIS MEAL WAS DONE. TWISTING HIS CHAIR. ROUND SO THAT HE COULD SEE ADDIE TRISTRAM'S PICTURE. HE REVIEWED HIS talk with Cecily, trying to trace how that unexpected turn in it had come

VERY SOON." HE ADDED. "HAVE A GLASS OF PORT, MR NEELD? IT'LL DO YOU

ABOUT AND AT WHAT POINT THE WEAPON HAD SPRUNG INTO HIS HAND. HE HAD
USED IT WITH EFFECT—WHETHER WITH THE EFFECT HE DESIRED HE DID NOT YET
KNOW. BUT HIS USE OF IT HAD NOT BEEN ALTOGETHER A RUSE OR AN ARTIFICE.
HIS SINCERTY, HIS VEHEWENCE, HIS VERY CRUELTY PROVED THAT. HE HAD

SPCKEN OUT A GENUINE RESENTIMENT AND A RIGHTEOUS REPROACH. THENCE CAME THE POWER TO MEET CEOLY'S TAUNTS IN EQUAL BATTLE AND TO SILENCE her charges of deceit with his retort of meanness.

ANOTHER!" HE REFLECTED. "I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD SEEM QUEER TO SOME PEOPLE" THIS WAS A GREAT ADVANCE TOWARD AN OUTSIDE VIEW OF THE FAMILY, CERTAINLY SUCH AN IDEA HAD NEVER OCCURRED TO ADDIE: SHE HAD always done the only possible thing! "Now what will she do?" AT LEAST IT DID NOT SEEM AS THOUGH SHE MEANT TO HAVE ANY DINNER. THE FACT WOULD HAVE MEANT MUCH HAD A MAN BEEN CONCERNED. WITH A WOMAN IT POSSESSED NO MORE THAN A MODERATE SIGNEICANCE. WITH A Tristram woman perhaps it had none at all. A cigar slicceded THE OGARETTE IN HARRY'S MOUTH. AS HE SAT THERE LOOKING AT HIS MOTHER'S PICTURE AND THINKING OF HIS WIFE. HE DID NOT IN THE LEAST REGRET THAT SHE WAS HIS WIFE OR THAT HE HAD LIED. ANY SCRUPLES THAT HE EVER HAD ON THAT SCORE HE HAD REMOVED FOR HIMSELF BY REALIZING THAT SHE WAS A CLEMUDGEON. NETHER DID HE REGRET WHAT HE HAD CALLED THE troublesome affair. It had brought new things into his life: new thoughts AND NEW POWERS HAD BECOME HIS. AND IT HAD GIVEN HIM CECILY— UNLESS ONE OF THEM HAD STILL TO GO TO TOWN! HE GLANCED AT THE CLOCK: IT

"AND WE WERE MARRIED TO-DAY! AND WE'RE DAMNABLY IN LOVE WITH ONE

MASON RETURNED AND BEGAN TO CLEAR AWAY. "MADAME ZABRISKA HAS ORDERED SOME SOUP AND CLARET TO BE FLACED IN THE HALL FOR HER Ladyship, my Lord," said he, in explanation of his action.

SOUP AND CLARET MIGHT MEAN ANYTHING—PEACE OR WAR—GOING OR STAYING—ANYTHING EXCEPT SITTING DOWN TO TABLE WITH HIM. ON THE WHOLE THEIR OMEN WAS NOT ENCOURAGING. A SUDDEN THOUGHT SHOT ACROSS HIS BRAIN. "BY JOVE, IF SHE'S TAKEN MY CAB!" HE JUMPED UP, BUT IN A MOMENT SAT DOWN AGAIN. THE COULD WOULD BE A GOOD ONE, BUT IT WOULD

NOT BEAT HIM. HE WOULD WALK TO MINGHAMAND GET A BED THERE. HE WAS QUITE CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT SLEEP ALONE AT BLENT. HE GLANGED AT THE CLOCK AGAIN, TO CATCH THE TRAIN AT FILLINGFORD SHE MUST START AT TEN—AND SO WITH HIM. STAY THOUGH, SHE MIGHT GO TO MERRION, MINA WOULD GIVE

WAS HALF-PAST NNE. A SUDDEN EXCITEMENT CAME ON HM, BUT HE conquered it or at least held it down, and sat there, smoking still,

SHE HAD LOOKED VERY BEAUTIFUL. OH, YES, YES! HARRY SMLED AS HE CONCEDED THE NATURAL MAN THAT POINT. IT WAS SEEN PLAINLY IN RETROSPECT; HE HAD NOT NOTICED IT MUCH AT THE TIME. HE HAD BEEN TOO MUCH COOLED IN PROVING HER A CLEMA DOSON. ONE THING AT A TIME WAS THE

her shelter.

NOW, AND BEGAN TO WONDER IF HE HAD SAID TOO MUCH. HE DECIDED THAT he had not said a word too much.

AT LAST HE GOT UP VERY DELIBERATELY AND WENT INTO THE HALL. IT WAS A QUARTER TO TEN, THE SOUP AND THE CLARET WERE THERE. HARRY STOOD LOOKING AT THEM A MOMENT, BUT THEY COULD NOT ANSWER HS QUESTION. WITH AN

IMPATIENT SHRUG OF HIS SHOULDERS HE WALKED OUT INTO THE GARDEN. AND

IT WAS OF BLENT, BLENT HIS OWN AGAIN, COME BACK TO HIM ENRICHED BY THE

there his first thought was not of Cecily.

TRISTRAM WAY—PROVIDED THE TIME WERE REASONABLY SHORT. BUT HE FELT IT

EXPERIENCE OF ITS LOSS, NOW NO MORE ALL HIS LIFE, BUT THE BACKGROUND OF THAT NEW LIFE HE HAD BEGUN TO MAKE FOR HIMSELF. HE WAS NO LONGER PUFFED UP BY THE POSSESSION OF IT—THE NEW EXPERIENCES HAD TAUGHT HIM A LESSON THERE—BUT HE WAS INFINITELY SATISFIED. BLENT FOR HIS OWN, IN HIS OWN WAY, ON HIS OWN TERWS—THAT WAS WHAT HE WANTED. SEE HOW FAIR IT WAS IN THE STILL NIGHT! HE WAS GLAD AND EXULTANT THAT IT WAS HIS AGAIN. WAS HE TOO A CURMUDGEON THEN? HARRY DID NOT PERCEIVE HOW ANY REASONABLE PERSSON COULD SAY SUCH A THING. A MAN WAY VALUE WHAT

is his own without being a miser or a churl.

NOBODY WAS TO BE SEEN IN THE GARDEN—NOT NEELD, NOT MINA, NOR
CEOLY. IN SURFRISE HE WALKED THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF IT WITHOUT
FINDING ANY OF THEM. HE WENT ON TO THE BRIDGE AND PEERED ABOUT, AND

FINDING ANY OF THEM. HE WENT ON TO THE BRIDGE AND PEERED ABOUT, AND THEN ON TO THE ROAD; HE LOOKED EVEN IN THE RIVER IN A CURIOSITY THAT FORGOT THE IMPOSSIBLE. HE WAS ALONE. WITH A QUICK STEP HE CAME BACK

AND STRODE ROUND THE HOUSE TO THE STABLES. HIS FLY WAS GONE. HE SEARCHED FOR A MAN TO QUESTION; THERE WAS NONE; THEY HAD ALL GONE TO SUPPER OR TO BED. AND THE BLY WAS GONE. HE RETLIENED TO THE BRIDGE WITH CHANCE. SHE WAS NOT IN THE HOUSE, SHE WAS NOT IN THE GARDEN. THERE
WAS ONE OTHER PLACE. WHERE SHE STILL MIGHT BE—IF INDEED SHE HAD NOT
PLED AND LEFT HIM DESCLATE. WHERE? THE ANSWER SEEMED SO EASY TO
HIM, HER CHOICE OF A SPOT SO OBVIOUS. IF HE FOUND HER ANYWHERE THAT
NIGHT HE WOULD FIND HER BY THE POOL, WALKING ON THE MARGIN OF ITS
WATERS—WHERE HE HAD SERN HER FIRST AND STARTIED AT THE THOIGHT THAT

Something came upon him, an impulse or an instinct. There was still a

an uncomfortable feeling of loneliness.

THINKING, HS WHOLE BEING STRUNG TO WAIT FOR AND TO MEET THE ANSWER TO his one great question.

ON WHAT THINGS A MAN'S LIFE MAY SEEM TO HANG! A FLUTTER OF WHITE THROUGH THE DARKNESS! THAT WAS ALL. HARRY SAW IT WITH A GREAT LEAP OF

SHE WAS HIS MOTHER'S PHANTOM. HE WALKED QUICKLY UP THE VALLEY, NOT

ON WHAT THINGS A MAN'S LIFE MAY SEEM TO HANG! A FLUTTER OF WHITE THROUGH THE DARKNESS! THAT WAS ALL. HARRY SAW IT WITH A GREAT LEAP OF THE HEART. HIS QUICK PACE DROPFED TO A LESURELY SAUNIER, HE STROLLED ON. SHE WAS WALKING TOWARD HIM. PRESENTLY SHE STOPPED, AND, TURNING TOWARD THE WATTER, STOOD LOCKING DOWN INTO IT. THE POOL WAS VERY BLACK THAT NIGHT, THE QLOUDS THICK OVERHEAD. BUT FOR HER WHITE FROCK HE MIGHT NEVER HAD SEEN HER AT ALL. HE CAME UP TO HER AND SPOKE IN A CARELESS VOICE.

"Where'S Neeld?" he asked. "I can't find him anywhere."

"He's gone back to Fairholme, Harry. It was late I was to say goodnight to you for him."

"AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MINA?" HIS VOICE WAS LEVEL, EVEN, AND restrained.

tired, so I put her in your fly to go up the hill."

THERE WAS SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. THEN HE ASKED: "DID YOU TELL THE FLY

"MINA'S GONE TO MERRION." SHE PAUSED BEFORE SHE ADDED: "SHE WAS

to come back again?"

"I knew you'd be here, if anywhere."

"WELL, I WAS SURE YOU'D COME HERE TO LOOK FOR ME, BEFORE YOU GAVE ME

I.P." SHE BIT OUT HER HANDS AND HE TOOK THEM IN HIS "IT WAS ALL TRIFF THAT.

SILENCE AGAIN. AND THEN A VOICE OF DECEPTIVE MEEKNESS. OF HIDDEN

mirth, answered him: "No. Harry."

you said about me, all abominably true." He did not contradict her.

"That's why I'M here," she went on. "When you've feelings like that, it's your duty not to run away from the place that excites them, but to stay there and fight them down manfully."

"I AGREE," SAID HARRY GRAVELY. "WHEN YOU'VE BASELY DECEIVED AND TRICKED SOMEBODY IT'S COWARDLY TO RUN AWAY. THE STRAIGHTEST THING IS TO stay with that person and try to redeem your character."

"How did you know ii?" she asked. "I hardly knew it was in my heart myself."
"It sharpens a man's wits to be called a liar—and not to be able to

deny the name."

"AND YOU CALLED ME A—CURMUDGEON! OH, HOW DID YOU HAPPEN ON THAT
FUNNY OLD WORD?" HER LAUGH RANG FRESH AND GAY THROUGH THE QUIET OF THE

night. "After you'd gone, Mina came to me."
"What happened then?"
"Well, I ought to have cried—and Mina did."

"Did Mina stop you going?"

"Mina? No!" The acme of scorn was in her voice.

"What then?" he asked, drawing her a little nearer to him.

"I wanted to obey your wishes. You said I was to stay—and you'd go." "YES, BUT YOU'VE SENT AWAY THE FLY," OBJECTED HARRY, "WELL, ALL THAT YOU said of me was true too." "We should start on a clear understanding then?" "I'm a liar—and vou're a curmudgeon? Yes." "What awful quarrels we shall have!" "I don't care a hang for them," said Harry. "And what about the Arbitration?" "Absurd, if I'm going to live in a state of war!" SUDDENLY CAME A SOUND OF WHEELS ROLLING BRISKLY ALONG THE ROAD FROM behind them. Cecily sprang away with a start.

"Perhaps there's still a chance for one of us." SHE CAUGHT HIM BY THE ARM. "LISTEN! IS IT STOPPING? NO! IT MUST BE PAST. the house!"

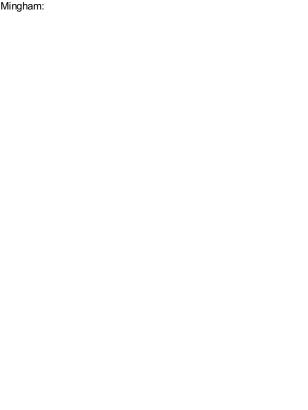
"Oh, the flv's not come back?" she cried.

"Do you want it to stop?" he asked. SHE TURNED HER EYES ON HIM HE SAW THEM GLEAM THROUGH THE DARKNESS. HE SAW HER LIPS JUST MOVE HE HEARD NO MORE THAN THE

lingering fear, the passionate reproach, of her murmured exclamation. "Oh, Harry!" THE NEXT INSTANT A VOICE RANG OUT IN THE NIGHT, LOUD, MELLOW, AND

BUOYANT. THEY LISTENED AS IT SANG. ITS NOTES DOMINATING THE SOUND OF THE WHEELS AND SEEMING TO FILL THE AIR AROUND THEM, GROWING LOUDER AS

THE WHEELS CAME NEAR, SINKING AGAIN AS THEY PASSED ON THE ROAD TO



"Drink to me only with thine eyes. And I will pledge with mine: Or leave a kiss but in the cup And I'll not look for wine. The thirst that from the soul doth rise Doth ask a drink divine:--" GRADUALLY, MELODIOUSLY, AND HAPPILY THE VOICE DIED AWAY IN THE

distance, and silence came. Harry drew his love to him.

"DEAR OLD BOB BROADLEY!" SAID HE SOFTLY, "HE'S DRIVING BACK FROM Fairholme, and he seems most particularly jolly."

"YES." SHE MURMURED. THEN SHE BROKE INTO A LOW, MERRY, TRIUMPHANT LAUGH. "I DON'T SEE WHY HE SHOULD BE SO PARTICULARLY JOLLY." SHE PRESSED. HIS HAND HARD. LAUGHING AGAIN. "HE'S ONLY ENGAGED." SHE WHISPERED.

"But we're married, aren't we, Harry?" "My dear, my dear, my dear!" said he.

XXX

Till the Next Generation

MAJOR DUPLAY HAD TAKEN A FLAT IN TOWN, AND MINA HAD COME UP TO AID HIM IN THE TASK OF FURNISHING IT. THE MAJOR WAS BUSY AND PROSPEROUS IN THESE DAYS. BLINKHAMPTON WAS TURNING UP TRUMPS FOR ALL CONCERNED, FOR IVER, FOR HARRY, FOR SOUTHEND, AND FOR HIM, THE SCHEME EVEN PROMISED TO BE REMUNERATIVE TO THE INVESTING PUBLIC. SO HE HAD TOLD MINA THAT HE MUST BE ON THE SPOT, AND THAT HENCEFORWARD THE COUNTRY AND THE CONTINENT WOULD KNOW HIM ONLY IN COCASIONAL DAYS OF RECREATION. HE ALSO MURMURED SOMETHING ABOUT HAVING MET A VERY ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, A WIDOW OF THIRTY-FIVE. THE GENERAL RESILLT SEMED TO BE THAT HE HAD FORGOTTEN HIS SORROWS, WAS WELL CONTENT, AND A GOOD DEAL MORE independent of his niece's society and countenance than he had been BEFORE. ALL THIS MINA TOLD TO LADY EVENSWOOD WHEN SHE WENT TO LUNCH IN GREEN STREET.

"Yes, I THINK I'VE LAUNCHED UNCLE," SAID SHE COMPLACENTLY, "AND NOW I shall devote myself to the Tristrams."

"You've been doing that for a long time, my dear."

"Yes, I suppose I have really," she laughed. "I've been a sort of Miss Swinkerton—I wish you knew her! Only I bevoted myself to one family and she does it for all the neighborhood."

Lady Evenswood looked at her with a kindly smile.

"You were rather in love with Harry, you know," she said.

HAD WANTED. IT WOULD HAVE MADE NO DIFFERENCE, OF COURSE, THEY'VE been pressing me to go on living at Merrion, and I shall." "Oh, if you could get nothing but a pigsty on the estate, you'd take it. Though I don't know what you'll find to do." "TO DO? OH, PLENTY! WHY, THEY'RE ONLY JUST BEGINNING, AND ----!" THE WAVE OF HER HANDS EXPRESSED THE ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES OF A TRISTRAM household.

"Which was very absurd. But-yes. I was. Only then Cecly came and

"AND GRADUALLY YOU'LL GLIDE INTO BEING AN OLD WOMAN LIKE ME-LOOKING. at the new generation!" "HER CHILDREN AND HIS! THERE OUGHT TO BE SOMETHING TO LOOK AT." SAID.

something in politics." "IT ISN'T MONEY EXACTLY. It'S A GOOD DEAL BLENT, HE WANTS TO MAKE THAT splendid. Perhaps he'll come to the politics in time."

Mina wistfully. "But we've not done with Harry himself vet." "ROBERT SAYS HE'S TOO FOND OF MAKING MONEY. OR HE MIGHT DO

"He's made you believe in him anyhow." "YES, AND I KNOW I DON'T COUNT, ALL THE SAME I'VE SEEN A GOOD DEAL OF

him. Mr Neeld and I have been in it right from the beginning." "AND IN THE END IT WAS ALL A MARE'S NEST, FANCY IF ADDIE TRISTRAM HAD known that!"

"I THINK SHE LIKED IT JUST AS WELL AS SHE THOUGHT IT WAS, AND I'M SURE

Harry did."

"OH, IF HE'S LIKE THAT, HE'LL NEVER DO FOR THE BRITISH PUBLIC, MY DEAR. HE MAY GET THEIR MONEY BUT HE WON'T GET THEIR VOTES. AFTER ALL, WOULD YOU "I SUPPOSE IT WOULD BE RATHER RISKY." SAID THE IMP RELUCTANTLY. BUT SHE CHETRED UP DIRECTLY ON THE STRENGTH OF AN OBVIOUS THOUGHT. "THERE ARE much more interesting things than politics." she said. "And how is Cecily?" asked Lady Evenswood. "OH. SHE'S JUST ADORABLE-AND MRS IVER'S GOT HER A VERY GOOD. housekeeper."

have the country governed by Addie Tristram's son?"

"I'VE JUST MET DISNEY." HE REMARKED. "HE DOESN'T SEEM TO MIND BEING out."

The old lady laughed as she turned to welcome Lord Southend.

"OH. HE'LL BE BACK BEFORE LONG. AND WITHOUT HIS INCUMBRANCES. AND FLORA'S DELIGHTED TO GET A WINTER ABROAD. IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED. more conveniently, she says."

"HE TOLD ME TO TELL YOU THAT HE THOUGHT YOUR YOUNG FRIEND-HE MEANT. Harry Tristram-was lost forever now." "What a shame!" cried Mina indignantly.

"JUST LIKE ROBERT! HE NEVER COLLD UNDERSTAND THAT A MAN HAS A HISTORY iust as a country has. He is and ought to be part of his family." "No sense of historical continuity." Nodded Southend. "I agree, and that's just why, though I admire Disney enormously, I——"

"Generally vote against him on critical occasions? Yes. Robert makes so many admirers like that."

"Is his work at Blinkhampton nothing?" demanded Mina.

"HE GOT IN FOR THAT WHILE HE WAS DISPOSSESSED." SMILED SOUTHEND. "I say, thank heaven he wouldn't have the viscounty!"

"It's all a very curious little episode."

"Yes. No more than that."

"YES, IT IS MORE" ORIED MINA, "WITHOUT IT HE'D NEVER HAVE MARRIED Cecilv."

"That would have been deplorable," agreed Lady Evenswood.

"ROMANCE MADAME ZABRISKA, ROMANCE!" SOLITHEND SHOOK HIS HEAD at her severely.

MINA FLINCHED A LITTLE UNDER THE OPPROBRIUM OF THE WORD, YET WHY? IN THESE DAYS WE HAVE COME TO RECOGNIZE—INDEED THERE HAS BEEN

SMALL CHOICE IN THE MATTER. UNLESS A MAN WOULD THROW AWAY BOOKS AND WEAR COTTON-WOOL IN HIS EARS-THAT THE ROWANCE OF ONE GENERATION MAKES THE REALITIES OF THE NEXT. AND THAT A LOVE-AFFAIR TWENTY YEARS OLD

BECOMES A PROBLEM IN HEREDITY. DEMANDING THE ATTENTION OF THE

LEARNED. AND RECEIVING THAT OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC ALSO. SO THAT THOUGH

THE AFFAIR AND THE MAN BE TO ALL SEEMING INSIGNIFICANT, CONSOLATION MAY BE FOUND IN THE PROSPECT OF A POSTHUMOUS IMPORTANCE. AND HE WHO

DID NOTHING VERY VISIBLE IN HIS LIFETIME MAY, WHEN HIS SON'S BIOGRAPHY COMES TO BE WRITTEN, BE HELD GRANDFATHER TO AN EPIC POEM OR A MURDER ON THE HIGH SEAS—AND IT SEEVIS TO BE CONSIDERED THAT IT IS TOUGH AND

GO WHICH WAY THE THING TURNS OUT. ARE THERE THEN ANY ERSODES LEET? DOES NOT EVERYTHING BECOME AN ENTERPRISE OF GREAT PITH AND MOMENT.

WITH RESULTS THAT WILL PROBABLY, SOME DAY OR OTHER, BE FOUND TO ADMIT OF MATHEMATICAL DEMONSTRATION? HAPPILY THE HUMAN RACE, IN PRACTICE IF NOT IN THEORY, DECLINES THE CONCLUSION, WE KNOW THAT WE ARE FREE, AND THERE'S AN END OF IT, SAID DR JOHNSON. WELL, AT LEAST WE CAN STILL THINK THAT WE ARE DOING WHAT WE LIKE-AND THAT'S THE BEGINNING OF MOST thinas. THAT TEMPORARY INFERIORITY OF BOB BROADLEY'S, ON WHICH CECILY HAD

TOUCHED SO FEELINGLY, WAS SOON REDRESSED, AND AFTER THE WEDDING

BLUSH A LITTLE WHEN HE SPOKE TO HER—A PASSING TRIBUTE TO THE THOUGHT OF what might have been. Harry greeted it with a laugh.

"I SUPPOSE WE'D BETTER BE STRAIGHTFORWARD ABOUT THIS?" HE SAID.

"MINGHAMS SO NEAR BLENT, YOU SEE. WE'RE BOTH VERY GLAD. AREN'T WE.

HARRY HAD A TALK WITH THE BRIDE IT WAS NOT LINNATURAL THAT SHE SHOULD.

Mrs Broadley?"
"I imagine so," said Janie. "You show no signs of pining anyhow."

"And as to our behavior—there's not a father in the kingdom who

"I was just as bad—because I thought you were too," said Harry.

wouldn't think us right."

difference." said she.

"I was the worst—because I think I was in love with Bob all the time."

"How could we do it then?" she asked.
"THAT'S THE COO THING. IT DIDN'T SEEM AT ALL OUT OF THE WAY AT THE TIME."

he pondered.
"You'd do it again now, if the case arose, but I shouldn't. That's the

HARRY CONSIDERED THIS REWARK FOR A MOMENT WITH AN IMPARTIAL AIR.
"WELL, PERHARS I SHOULD," HE ADMITTED AT LAST, "BUT YOU NEEDN'T TELL THAT
to Cecily. Content yourself with discussing it with Mina or Mr Neeld."

"I'M TIRED OF BOTH OF THEM," SHE CRIED. "THEY DO NOTHING BUT TALK ABOUT you."

THAT NIGHT AS HE SAT IN THE GARDEN AT BLENT WITH HIS WIFE, HARRY RETURNED THE COMPLIMENT BY TALKING OF THE IMP. HE LOOKED UP TOWARD MERRICN and saw the lights in the windows.

"I think Mina is with us for life, Cecily," said he.

HASN'T SHE'S SHE KNEW ABOUT YOU BEFORE I DID, SHE KNEW BLENT BEFORE I DID. AND IT'S NOT ONLY WITH YOU AND ME SHE KNEW YOUR MOTHER, ADDIE Tristram, too."

"Yes, Mina goes right back to the beginning of the thing."

"AND THE THING, AS YOU CALL IT, IS WHAT BROUGHT US HERE TOGETHER. SO MINA SEEMS TO HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT TOO. IT ALL COMES back to me when I look at her, and I like to have her here."

"WELL, SHE'S PART OF THE FAMILY STORY NOW. AND SHE'LL PROBABLY KEEP A JOURNAL AND MAKE ENTRIES ABOUT US, LIKE THE LATE MR CHOLDERTON, AND SOME DAY BE EDITED BY A FUTURE MR NEED. MINA MUST STOP, THAT'S clear."

"It's clear anyhow—because nothing would make her go," said Cecily.

"Let's go up the hill and see her now?" he suggested.

"I LIKE HER TO BE," SHE ANSWERED WITH A LAUCH. "FIRST BECAUSE I LIKE BEING LOVED, AND SHE LOVES ME. AND THEN I LIKE YOU TO BE LOVED, AND SHE LOVES YOU. BESIDES. SHE'S BEEN SO CLOSELY MIXED UP WITH IT ALL.

FEORLE IN THE DRAWING-ROOM, AND HARRY SIGNED TO CEOLLY TO KEEP OUT OF sight. They approached stealthily.

"WHO'S WITH HER? I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE WAS STAYING HERE," WHISPERED Cecily.

Together they climbed the HILL and reached the terrace. There were

Harry turned his face toward her, smiling. "Hush, it's old Neeld!"

THEY FEETED IN. NEELD WAS SITTING IN AN ARM-CHAIR WITH SOME SHEETS
OF DIRECT IN HIS HAND, HE HAD HIS SECTION ES ON AND APPORTUNY HAD

OF PAPER IN HIS HAND. HE HAD HIS SPECTACLES ON AND APPARENTLY HAD
BEEN READING SOMETHING ALCULD TO MINA; INDEED THEY HEARD HIS VOICE
DIE AWAY JUST AS THEY CAME UP. MINA STOOD IN FRONT OF HIM, HER MANNER
full of her old excitement.

THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM AND"—HARRY PRESSED HIS WIRE'S HAND AND LAUGHED SILENTLY—"SHE ORIED OUT JUST WHAT YOU'VE READ. I REMEMBER EXACTLY HOW SHE LOOKED AND THE VERY WORDS THAT MIR CHOLDERTON USES. "THINK OF THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES, THE BNORMOUS DIFFERENCE!" SHE SAID. Oh, it might have been yesterday, Mir Neeld!"

Harry leapt over the window-sill and burst into the room with a laugh.

"YES. THAT'S IT. THAT'S JUST RIGHT!" THEY HEARD HER EXCLAIM. "SHE STOOD IN

"Oh, you dear silly people, you're at it again!" said he.
"The story poes not lose its interest for Me." REMARKED OLD MR NEED

PRIMLY, AND HE ADDED, AS HE GREETED CEOLY, "IT WON'T SO LONG AS I CAN

look at your face, my dear. You keep Addie Tristram still alive for me."
"SHE'S LADY TRISTRAM—AND I'M THE ENORMOUS DIFFERENCE, I SUPPOSE,"
said Harry.
MINA AND NEELD DID NOT QUITE UNDERSTAND WHY CEOLY TURNED SO

difference now."

MEANWHLE, DOWN IN BLENTMOUTH, MISS SWINKERTON LOOKED UP FROM THE local paper and remarked across the table to Mrs Trumbler:

SUDDENLY AND PUT HER HAND IN HARRY'S, SAYING, "NO, HARRY, THERE'S NO

JANUARY. YOU'LL REMEMBER THAT I TOLD YOU THAT TWO MONTHS AGO, MRS Trumbler."

"Yes. Miss Swinkerton, but that was before all the——"

"HERE'S AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT LADY TRISTRAM WILL GIVE A BALL AT BLENT IN

"Really I'm not often wrong, my dear," interrupted Miss S. decisively.

"WELL, I HOPE THERE WON'T BE ANY MORE CHANGES," SIGHED MRS TRUMBLER.
"They're so very startling."

SHE MIGHT REST IN PEACE AWHLE. ADDIE TRISTRAM WAS DEAD, AND THE

TITLE TO BLENT WAS SAFE TILL THE NEXT GENERATION. BEYOND THAT IT WOULD NOT PERHAPS BE SAFE TO SPEAK IN VIEW OF THE TRISTRAM BLOOD AND THE Tristram ways.

THE END.

[Transcriber's Note Several typographical errors in the original edition have been corrected. The following sentences are as they originally appeared, with corrections noted in brackets.]

Chapter VII

THAT SEEMED TO HAVE LITTLE CONCERN WITH BOD [BOB] BROADLEY AND to be engrossed in the struggle between Harry and Duplay.

BOTH FELL INTO SILENCE AGAIN, LOCKING! [LOCKING] ABSENTLY AT THE sunshine playing among the trees.

Chapter VIII

AS IT WAS, BE [HE] BEGAN TO BE CONVINCED THAT MINA WOULD DECLINE TO REVENBER ANY DATES EVEN APPROXIMATELY, AND THIS WAS ALL SHE had professed to do in her first disclosure.

Miss S. looked as [at] her suspiciously.

Chapter XVIII

"Well, Yes, I—I'm nterested in the family.["] He telegraphed a glance of caution to the old lady; he meant to convey that the present was not a happy moment to broach the matter that was in their minds.

Chapter XXI

Iver listened atentively [attentively], Harry with evident impatience.

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