

'Then this is my plan,' Hilda went on hastily. 'We must do something that'll take Mr. Le Breton out of himself for a short time entirely—that'll give him occupation of a kind he thinks right, and at the same time put money in his pocket. Now, he's always talking about this socialistic business of his; but why doesn't he tell us what he has actually seen about the life and habits of the really poor? Mrs. Le Breton tells me he knows the East End well: why doesn't he sit down and give us a good rattling, rousing, frightening description of all that's in it? Of course, I don't care twopence about the poor myself—not in the lump, I mean—I beg your pardon, Mr. Berkeley,'—for the Progenitor gave a start of surprise and astonishment—'you know we women are nothing if not concrete; we never care for anything in the abstract, Mr. Le Breton used to tell me; we want the particular case brought home to our sympathies before we can interest ourselves about it. After all, even *you* who are men don't feel very much for all the miserable wretched people there are in China, you know; they're too far away for even you to bother your heads about. But I *do* care about the Le Bretons, and it strikes me we might help them a little in this way. I know a lot of artists, Mr. Berkeley; and I know one who I think would just do for the very work I want to set him. (He's poor, too, by the way, and I don't mind giving him a lift at the same time and killing two birds with one stone.) Very well, then; I go to him, and say, "Mr. Verney," I say,—there now, I didn't mean to tell you his name, but no matter; "Mr. Verney," I shall say, "a friend of mine in the writing line is going to pay some visits to the very poor quarters in the East End, and write about it, which will make a great noise in the world as sure as midday."

'But how do you know it will?' asked the Progenitor, simply.

Hilda turned round upon him with an unfeigned look of startled astonishment. 'How do I know it will?' she said confidently. 'Why, because I mean it to, Mr. Berkeley. Because I say it shall. Because I choose to make it. Two Cabinet ministers shall quote it in the House, and a duke shall write letters to the "Times" denouncing it as an intensely wicked and revolutionary publication. If I choose to float it, I *will* float it.—Well, "Mr. Verney," I say for example, "will you undertake to accompany him and make sketches? It'll be unpleasant work, I know, because I've been there myself to see, and the places don't smell nice at all—worse than Genoa or the old town at Nice even, I can tell you: but it'll make you a name; and in any case the