

fingers when I saw him last half alive and half dead at Hipsley station."

"Quite so," the lawyer answered. "That's exactly what it is. You're perfectly right. The men who brought him back handed it over to me as his legal adviser; and though I didn't draw it up myself—poor Solomons was always absurdly secretive about these domestic matters, and had them done in town by a strange solicitor—I see it's in reality his last will and testament."

"Later than the one I propound?" Paul inquired, hardly suspecting as yet whither all this tended.

"Later by two days, sir," Mr. Wilkie rejoined, beaming. "It's executed, Sir Paul, on the very same day, I note, as the date you've endorsed the will he gave you upon. In point of fact, he must have had this new will drawn up and signed in the morning, and must have deposited the dummy one it superseded with you in the afternoon. Very like his natural secretiveness, that! He wished to conceal from you the nature of his arrangements. For Lionel Solomons' death seems entirely to have changed his testamentary intentions and to have diverted his estate, both real and personal—well, so to speak, to the next representative."

"You don't mean to say," Paul cried, astonished, "he's left it all to Mme. Ceriolo—to Lionel's widow?"

The lawyer smiled a sphinx-like enigmatic smile. "No, my dear sir," he answered in the honeyed voice in which a wise attorney invariably addresses a rich and prospective client. "He revokes all previous wills and codicils whatsoever, and leaves everything he dies possessed of absolutely and without reserve to—his dear friend, Sir Paul Gascoyne, Baronet."

"No; you don't mean that!" Paul cried, taken aback, and clutching at his chair for support, his very first feeling