

ice, and she reckoned he'd take her to the tree over there to get one—always in quest of that one somebody who made it worth his while to run the gauntlet of everybody. One of his oldest friends seized upon him, a man with whom he had been at Oxford seven years before, with whom he had maintained the friendship begun in those days, and who was not to be put off with the passing hand-shake which served for other people.

'I want a talk with you, Hillersdon. Why didn't you look me up last Tuesday. We were to have dined and done a theatre. Don't apologise; I see you forgot all about it. By Jove, old fellow, you are looking dreadfully washed out. What have you been doing with yourself?'

'Nothing beyond the usual mill-round. A succession of late parties may have impaired the freshness of my complexion.'

'Come up the river with me. Let me see, to-morrow will be Saturday. We can go to Oxford by the afternoon express, spend a couple of nights at the Mitre, look up the dons whom we knew as undergrads, and row down to Windsor by Tuesday night.'

'I should adore it; but it's impossible. I have an engagement which will keep me in London. I shall see you again presently.'

He slipped out of the little group in which his friend figured. He had made the circuit of the lawn, looking right and left for that tall and graceful form which his eye would have recognised even afar off; and now he plunged into the shrubberied labyrinth which lay between the fine, broad lawn and the high walls which secluded Lady Fridoline's domain from the vulgar world.

He passed a good many couples sauntering slowly in the leafy shade, and talking in those subdued accents which seem to mean very much, and often do mean very little. At last in the distance, he saw the one form and face that could conjure heart and senses into sudden tem-