

wont to express it, they were not inclined to be kind to her. Her runaway marriage with Sir Bernard Brian in her irresponsible girlhood had caused something of a split between them. The wild Irish baronet had never been regarded with a favourable eye, and her subsequent sojourn in Ireland had practically severed all connection with them.

Sir Bernard's death and her subsequent migration to London had not healed the breach. She was regarded as flighty and unreliable. There was no knowing what her next venture might be, and, save for a very occasional correspondence with an elderly bachelor uncle who was careful not to betray too keen an interest in her affairs, she was left severely alone.

Therefore she had too much pride to ask for help, sustaining herself instead upon the kindness of friends till even this prop at length gave way; and she, Maud and poor little Bunny (whose very empty title was all he possessed in the world) found themselves stranded at Fairharbour at the dead end of the season with no means of paying their way even there.

Not wholly stranded, however! Lady Brian had stayed at Fairharbour before at the Anchor Hotel, down by the fishing-quay—the "Anchovy" Hotel, Bunny called it, on account of its situation. It was not a very high-class establishment, but Lady Brian had favoured it on a previous occasion because Lord Saltash had a yacht in the vicinity, and it had seemed such a precious opportunity for dear Maud. He also had large racing-stables in the neighbourhood of the downs behind the little town, and there was no knowing when one or other of his favourite pastimes might tempt him thither.

Nothing had come of the previous visit, however, save a pleasant, half-joking acquaintance with Mr. Sheppard, the proprietor of the Anchor Hotel, during the progress of which Lady Brian's appealing little ways had laid such firm hold of the worthy landlord's rollicking fancy that she had found it quite difficult to tear herself away.

Matters had not then come to such a pass, and she had finally extricated herself with no more than a laughing promise to return as soon as the mood took her. Maud had been wholly unaware of the passage between them, which had been of a very slight and frothy order; and not till she found herself established in some very shabby lodgings within a stone's