

"That is so."

"The money should be paid, of course."

"I fear it must be paid."

"Will you see him and tell him that it shall be. I—I am fond of Etruria, but I am not so fond of Toft, and I would rather not—would you see him about this?"

"I quite understand," Basset answered. "Of course I will do it." They had both regained the ordinary plane of feeling and he spoke in his usual tone. "You would like me to see him now?"

"If you please," she said.

He went from the room. There were other things that, as executor, he must arrange, and when he had dealt with Toft and, not without a hard word or two, had settled that matter, he went round the house and gave the orders he had to give. The light was beginning to fail and shadows to darken the corners, and as he glanced into this room and that and viewed the long-remembered places and saw ghosts and heard the voices of the dead, he knew that he was taking leave of many things, of things that had made up a large part of his life.

And he had other thoughts hardly more cheering. Mary's engagement was broken off. But how? By whom? Had she freed herself? Or had Audley, *immemor Divum*, and little foreseeing the discovery that trod upon his threshold, freed her? And if so, why? He was in the dark as to this and as to all—her attitude, her thoughts, her feelings. He knew only that while her freedom trebled the moment of the news he had brought, the gifts of fortune which that news laid at her feet rose insuperable between them and formed a barrier he could never pass.

For he could never woo her now. Whatever dawn of hope crept quivering above the horizon—and she had been kind, ah, in that moment of softness and remembrance she had been kind!—he could not speak now.

The dusk was far advanced and firelight was almost the only light when, after half an hour's absence, he returned to the parlour. Mary was standing before the hearth, her slender