

you see, had to get my consent, which I telegraphed to him half an hour ago."

"I have known it was certain, I meant," said she; "it has been in the air."

"It has reached ground," he said; "Percy is coming to see me to-morrow. There will be a great deal of business to go through and settlements to make. But, indeed, I am not yet quite sure whether, under his grandfather's will, he may marry until his twenty-fifth birthday."

"You will find it difficult to persuade Lady Otterbourne of that," remarked Mrs. Montgomery. "When is he twenty-five?"

"In September; he will only have to wait a few months. Indeed, the marriage could hardly take place before."

"Oh, he is a good young man, and Lady Otterbourne knows it," said Lady Stoakley, viciously. "She will rest on her oars awhile now. Really, for a middle-aged woman, her exertions have been immense."

Mrs. Montgomery turned to watch the progress of the opera, and abstained from smiling. Poor dear Mabel really gave herself away dreadfully sometimes. For a woman of forty to talk about other people being middle-aged was more than a trifle dangerous, and Mrs. Montgomery reflected with thankfulness that she herself was only thirty-nine and passed for thirty-five at the most, and had a birthday very conscientiously and with-