

reached her. At length she wrote, two days after Lord Audley's visit, to Quebec Street, to the house where she had stayed with her father many years before. It was the only address of the kind that she knew. But she received no answer, and her heart sank. The difficulty, small as it was, harassed her; she had no adviser, and ten times a day, to keep up her spirits, she had to tell herself that she was independent, that she had eight thousand pounds, that the whole world was open to her, and that, compared with the penniless girl who had lived on the upper floor of the Hôtel Lambert, she was fortunate!

But in the Hôtel Lambert she had had work to do, and here she had none!

She thought of taking rooms in Riddelsley, but Lord Audley was there and she shrank from meeting him. She would wait another week for the answer from London, and then, if none came, she must decide what she would do. But in her room that night the thought that Basset had abandoned her, that he no longer cared, no longer desired to come near her, broke her down. Of course, he was not to blame. He fancied her still engaged to her cousin and receiving from him all the advice, all the help, all the love, she needed. He fancied her happy and content, in no need of him. And, alas, there was the pinch. She had written to him to tell him of her engagement. She could not write to him to tell him that it was at an end!

And then, by the morrow's post, there came a long letter from Basset, and in the letter the whole astonishing, overwhelming story of the discovery of the document which John Audley had sought so long, and in the end so disastrously.

"No doubt," the writer added, "Lord Audley has made you acquainted with the facts, but I think it my duty as your uncle's executor to lay them before you in detail, and also to advise you that in your interest and in view of the change in your position—and in Lord Audley's—which this imports, it is proper that you should have independent advice."