

breach. The most prudent thing to do, therefore, was to turn and take another corridor. And Priam would have fled, being capable of astonishing prudence when prudence meant the avoidance of unpleasant encounters; but, just as he was turning, the woman in conversation with Mr. Oxford saw him, and stepped towards him with the rapidity of thought, holding forth her hand. She was tall, thin, and stiffly distinguished in the brusque, Dutch-doll motions of her limbs. Her coat and skirt were quite presentable; but her feet were large (not her fault, of course, though one is apt to treat large feet as a crime), and her feathered hat was even larger. She hid her age behind a veil.

"How do you do, Mr. Farll?" she addressed him firmly, in a voice which nevertheless throbbed.

It was Lady Sophia Entwistle.

"How do you do?" he said, taking her offered hand.

There was nothing else to do, and nothing else to say.

Then Mr. Oxford put out his hand.

"How do you do, Mr. Farll?"

And, taking Mr. Oxford's hated hand, Priam said again, "How do you do?"

It was all just as if there had been no past; the past seemed to have been swallowed up in the ordinariness of the crowded corridor. By all the rules for the guidance of human conduct, Lady Sophia ought to have denounced Priam with outstretched