

to the east in all my habits and thoughts—'and never the twain shall meet.'"

"I don't want to fight with anybody," said Clare pensively. "I'm simply striving to be civil and nice to everybody all round, and the position is pretty nearly impossible as it stands. You must see that, Estelle. If Cyril is to do any good, or achieve a position worth having, we must have not only a free hand but a full purse. Cyril won't ask his mother. He has thrust me into the painful position of being obliged to do it."

"I shouldn't do that for any man alive," said Estelle clearly. "And, please, don't tell me these things. They only make me miserable, Clare. Surely father and mother are the people to discuss them with."

"I only thought you might be a friend instead of an enemy, but I'm mistaken," said Clare coldly, and they went into the house.

The cloud seemed to have passed when they met at dinner, where everybody was beaming. It was a family party, at which Clare was the only alien. But Cyrus Rodney, whose beautiful philosophy of life invariably prompted him to make the best of everything, showed special kindness to his new daughter, and drew her, as it were, into the inner circle.

Naturally he had a great deal to say about his Australian visit, and Clare took her full share in the conversation, exerting herself to please in a way which Mrs. Rodney had never yet seen.

"She put her best foot foremost to-night, and no mistake, Cyrus," said Mrs. Rodney to her husband when they went upstairs. "But don't you be taken in. She can be nasty enough. She has often been nasty to me, and I've just had to show her that I won't have it! She isn't satisfied with Cyril's allowance. Now, Cyrus, don't you think that five hundred a year is a very good income for a young couple just starting? Besides, she must have