

thousand pounds per annum, for a man in your position, is a somewhat small income. Nella is frightfully extravagant. I have known her to spend sixty thousand dollars in a single year, and have nothing to show for it at the end. Why! she would ruin you in twelve months.'

'Nella must reform her ways,' Aribert said.

'If she is content to do so,' Racksole went on, 'well and good! I consent.'

'In her name and my own, I thank you,' said Aribert gravely.

'And,' the millionaire continued, 'so that she may not have to reform too fiercely, I shall settle on her absolutely, with reversion to your children, if you have any, a lump sum of fifty million dollars, that is to say, ten million pounds, in sound, selected railway stock. I reckon that is about half my fortune. Nella and I have always shared equally.'

Aribert made no reply. The two men shook hands in silence, and then it happened that Nella entered the room.

That night, after dinner, Racksole and his friend Félix Babylon were walking together on the terrace of the Grand Babylon Hotel.

Félix had begun the conversation.

'I suppose, Racksole,' he had said, 'you aren't getting tired of the Grand Babylon?'