

branches. And Flora's delighted to get a winter abroad. It couldn't have happened more conveniently, she says."

"He told me to tell you that he thought your young friend—he meant Harry Tristram—was lost for ever now."

"What a shame!" cried Mina indignantly.

"Just like Robert! He never could understand that a man has a history just as a country has. He is and ought to be part of his family."

"No sense of historical continuity," nodded Southend. "I agree, and that's just why, though I admire Disney enormously, I——"

"Generally vote against him on critical occasions? Yes, Robert makes so many admirers like that."

"Is his work at Blinkhampton nothing?" demanded Mina.

"He got in for that while he was dispossessed," smiled Southend. "I say, thank heaven he wouldn't have the viscounty!"

"That would have been deplorable," agreed Lady Evenswood.

"It's all a very curious little episode."

"Yes. No more than that."

"Yes, it is more," cried Mina. "Without it he'd never have married Cecily."

"Romance, Madame Zabriská, romance!" Southend shook his head at her severely.

Mina flinched a little under the opprobrium of the word. Yet why? In these days we have come to recognise—indeed there has been small choice in the matter, unless a man would throw away books and wear cotton-wool in his ears—that the romance of one generation makes the realities of the next, and that a love affair twenty years old becomes a problem in heredity, demanding the attention of the learned, and receiving that of the general public also. So that though the affair and the man be to all seeming insignificant, consolation may be found in the prospect of a posthumous importance; and he who did nothing very visible in his lifetime may, when his son's biography comes to be written, be held grandfather to an epic