

and no immediate answer came. One vesta had perished in the attempt. The second made a lurid flash on his face, in the shadow of the protecting hat, his invariable grey felt. As Athelstan Taylor looked at him, he saw again, more clearly than before, that the face was inconsistent with its owner's levity of tone two minutes since. He negatived his own impulse to ask questions, and waited. Perhaps it was part of a growing interest in his companion that made him mix with this curiosity, about what was going on inside that head, a wish to see the hat back on it. For the sun was still fierce at the end of a hot June day, and the soft brown hair the wind blew about so easily seemed to have little shelter in it for the somewhat delicate skin the blue veins made so much show on, below on the forehead.

"You would give a good deal," said Challis, when the pipe was well alight, "to know what I think about the religious education of children? So would I!" It was a disappointing ending. His hearer had expected something better.

"What have you done about your own boy?" said he, with a kind of magnanimous impatience. "Come! That's the point."

"Nothing. At least, I have sent him to Rugby, where he will be brought up a member of the Church of England."

"But before?"

"I left him to his mother—at least, his aunt. . . . I told you. . . ."

"I know."

"So you observe that with respect to Master Bob I have pursued a policy of well-considered devolution of responsibility. Perhaps I should say of evasion. However, I think I may lay claim to having given my son every reasonable opportunity of believing the creeds that will best advance his interests in the world. He has had the advantage of imbibing them from a lady who enjoys the privilege of being able to believe what she chooses, and has inherited or selected the tenets of the well-to-do. He has been till lately at a preparatory Academy, where every one of the masters is in orders, and every other boy the son of a Bishop. And now he's gone to Rugby! What can a human father do more, in the name of respectability?"