

very well that we can never be anything to each other, and my plans are all made. As soon as Madeleine is married I shall go out to Africa and try for luck as other men have tried—and found it. It is better for me to be far away from you——”

“No, no, I love you!” cried Virginia. Then putting him from her with a quick gesture: “But it will be I who goes far away from you. I have no right to care. My cousin, Roger Broom, will take me to England—anywhere—it doesn’t matter. I promised long ago to marry him. In the winter perhaps——”

“In the winter you and Max here will be spending your honeymoon at the Château de la Roche,” said Roger’s voice, with a hard cheerfulness. “That old promise—why, I never meant to hold you to it, dear. I don’t take bribes, and—I saw this coming long ago. I’m quite content it should be so. You’ll forgive me for overhearing, won’t you, girlie? I didn’t mean to give you such a surprise, but I’m not sorry now. Give me your hand, Max, old man, and you, Virginia. There! I’m glad it should be the old cousin-guardian who joins them together.”