

through what Mr. Neeld called practically the same experience already; in that very room it had happened.

Suddenly the two men saw a light born in Harry's eyes; his brow grew smooth, the smile on his lips wider. He gave a moment's more consideration to the new thing. Then he raised his head and spoke to Wilmot Edge.

"There are a good many complications in this matter, Colonel Edge. I've had my life upset once before, and I assure you it's rather troublesome work. It wants a little time and a little thinking. You get rather confused—always changing your train, you know. I have work on hand—plans and so forth. And, as you say, of course there's the lady too." He laughed as he ended by borrowing Neeld's phrase.

"I can understand all that, Lord Tristram."

"Do you mind saying Mr. Tristram; saying Mr. Tristram to me and to everybody for the present? It won't be for long; a week perhaps."

"You mean, keep the change in the position a secret?" Edge seemed rather startled.

"You've kept the secret for many years, Colonel. Shall we say a week more? And you too, Mr. Neeld? Nothing at all to the people at Blentmouth? Shall we keep Miss S. in the dark for a week more?" The thought of Miss Swinkerton carried obvious amusement with it.

"You mean to choose your opportunity with—with your cousin?" Neeld asked.

"Yes, exactly—to choose my opportunity. You see the difficult character of the situation? I ask your absolute silence for a week."

"Really I——" Old Neeld hesitated a little. "These concealments lead to such complications," he complained. He was thinking, no doubt, of the Iver engagement and the predicament in which it had landed him.

"I don't ask it on my own account. There's my cousin."

"Yes, yes, Neeld; there's the lady too."

"Well, Edge, if you're satisfied, I can't stand out. For a week then—silence."