

Now the young man rose and passed from his seat. Crossing the floor of the House, he joined a crowd that was pressing into a doorway under the gallery to the left of the Speaker.

Lady Brereton clasped her hands tightly and shut her eyes. Mrs. Savile turned to her companion.

‘He has gone into the wrong lobby—that means——’

‘What I said,’ remarked Lady Sarah quietly.

‘That his engagement *is* broken off! Good Heavens, to think of it!’

Lady Brereton sat silent, clasping and unclasping her hands. She was not surprised, but the actual assurance of what had happened stirred her more than she would have thought possible. She was looking back over her lad’s life—his early childhood—Oxford—the tragedy of his marriage—and now—this. Ultimately he had been consistent; this was of one piece with the rest.

It seemed to her to be hours before that division was concluded; but at last the tellers once more walked up the House.

The second reading of the Bill was carried by a large majority. The Opposition for which Gervase had voted was beaten, as all had anticipated.

‘Well!’ said Mrs. Savile, her wrath trembling into words. ‘He has voted against an act of justice, if ever there was one!’

‘But—if he believed that he was doing right?’

‘He oughtn’t to believe that such a thing *could* be right! Think of him turning away to the left