

way out of the odd dilemma. Edie was right, after all, no doubt. As yet, at least, he had no authority to answer in any way for Elsie's wishes. If she wanted Whitestrand, it was hers to take or reject as she wished, and hers only. Still, he salved his conscience with the consolatory idea that it was not actually compulsory upon him to show Elsie any legal advertisement, inquiry, or suggestion which might happen to emanate from the solicitors to the estate of the late Hugh Massinger. So far as he had any official cognizance of the facts, indeed, the heirs, executors and assigns of the deceased had nothing on earth to do in any way with Elsie Challoner, of San Remo, Italy. Second cousinhood is at best a very vague and uncertain form of relationship. He decided, therefore, not without some internal qualms, to accept Edie's suggested compromise for the present, and to wait patiently for the matter in hand to settle itself by spontaneous arrangement.

But Alfred Heberden, Esquire, solicitor to the deceased, acted otherwise. He had failed to draw any satisfactory communications in answer to his advertisement save one from a bogus firm of so-called Property Agents, the proprietors of a fallacious list of Next of Kin Wanted, and one from a third-rate pawnbroker in the Borough Road, whose wife's aunt had once married a broken-down railway porter of the name of Messenger, from Weem in Shropshire, and who considered himself, accordingly, the obvious representative and heir-at-law of the late Hugh Massinger of the Utter Bar, and of Whitestrand Hall, in Suffolk, Esquire, deceased without issue. Neither of these applications, however, proving of sufficient importance to engage the attention of Mr. Alfred Heberden's legal mind, that astute gentleman proceeded entirely on his own account to investigate the genealogy and other antecedents of Hugh Massinger, with a single eye to the discovery of the missing inheritor of the estate, envisaged as a person from whom natural gratitude would probably wring a substantial solatium to the good attorney who had proved his title. And the result of his inquiries into the Massinger pedigree took tangible shape at last, a week or two later, in a second advertisement of a more exact sort, which Edie Relf, that diligent and careful student of the