

"Certainly ; and three years later she came and told me so."

"Then how in the world does it concern me ?" cried Harry impatiently.

"You put your finger on the spot, Mr. Tristram, but you took it off again. You said she presented the authority all the same."

"Yes. The authority would be revoked by his death. At least, I suppose there's no question of that ? Did she get at them before they heard of the death ?"

"This money was payable on June 22—the 10th as it's reckoned in Russia—but we needn't trouble about that. As you and Neeld are both aware, on the 18th my brother fell into a collapse which was mistaken for death."

"Yes, the 18th," murmured Neeld, referring to the paper before him, and reading Josiah Cholderton's account of what Madame de Kries had told him at Heidelberg.

"From that attack he rallied temporarily, but not until his death had been reported."

"I am not the man to forget that circumstance," said Harry.

"The report of his death was, of course, contradicted immediately. The doctor attending him saw to that."

"Naturally ; and I suppose the Comtesse would see to it too."

"And the only importance that the occurrence of the 18th has for us at present is that, according to the Comtesse's story, it suggested to the doctor the course which she, on his prompting as she declared and certainly with his connivance, afterwards adopted. My brother, having rallied from his first collapse, kept up the fight a little while longer. It was, however, plain to the doctor that he could live but a very short time. The Comtesse knew this. My brother was not in a condition to transact business, and was incapable of securing to her any benefit by testamentary disposition, even if he had wished to do so. Her only chance was the money for the property. This she saw her way to securing with the doctor's help, even although my brother should die before it fell due,