

"I wish I could send Peggy back to school. Surrey, you know I have asked the Sutton-Comptons and a few more of the people about to that little dinner to-morrow night. I shall introduce Wylde as my son then. It will give him his place. And I will make my friends understand that he has not ousted you from yours."

Surrey went red. This promised to be an ordeal for himself as well as Wylde.

"I think it would be easier if you did it privately," he said.

"It is not going to be specially easy in any case. But that has nothing to do with it. He has got to understand, as I have already told him, that if he ruins his life now he brings disgrace on more than himself. And Peggy shall not know until then. I think he won't forget the public recognition from the friends round my own table and from the servants in the house where he should have been born."

"I'll be bound he won't. But you'd best let me coach him a bit first, or I think he'll probably run."

"Would he let you?"

"I fancy he would . . . now," said Surrey, simply, and the Colonel said no more. But he went to breakfast with a lighter heart than he had carried for very long.

When the Colonel went to his appointment Surrey and Wylde took Peggy round this small capital of Rutland with its ancient history and its sleepy suggestion of a half-forgotten village. Surrey had been through it many times before, and he led straight to a small shop where he procured a tall boy and the key of that old Hall which is all remaining of the Norman Castle, and in which it is almost certain that the Assizes have been held without cease from the Conqueror's day until this.

The tall boy knew his history and legends well, and he gave Peggy both with careful precision; from the style of architecture in the Norman pillars and massive