

with people who belonged to the old life than parted him from them. He was weak himself too; while the people were at hand, he would seek them, as he had sought Lady Evenswood. At the Arbitration he would be far off, beyond the narrow seas and among folk who, recognising the peculiarity of his position, would make a point of not mentioning Blent or speaking of anybody connected with it. It was from this point of view that he was inclined towards the offer, and he did not disguise it from himself; but for it he would rather have gone on with Blinkhampton, perhaps because he had a free hand there, while he could go to the Arbitration only as a subordinate. Blent apart, the offer was valuable to him as a sign of Disney's appreciation rather than on its own account.

He went home and wrote to Iver. The letter weighed all considerations save the one which really weighed with him; he put himself fairly in Iver's hands but did not conceal his own wish; he knew that if Iver were against the idea on solid business grounds he would not be affected by Harry's personal preference. But the business reasons, when examined, did not seem very serious, and Harry thought that he would get leave to go. He rose from his writing with a long sigh. If he received the answer he expected, he was at the parting of the ways; and he had chosen the path that led directly and finally away from Blent.

An evening paper was brought to him. A tremendous headline caught his notice. "Resignation of Lord Hove! He will not arbitrate about Barililand. Will the Government break up?" Probably not, thought Harry; and it was odd to reflect that, if Lord Hove had got his way, he would have lost his heroic remedy. So great things and small touch and intersect one another. Perhaps Theo (who could now settle that question about the kicking with his friends) would maintain that Flora Disney had talked too much to Harry at dinner, instead of taking all pains to soothe Lord Hove!

It was his last struggle; he had no doubt that he could win, but the fight was very fierce. Impatient of his quiet