

they might take John Audley's life! "I brought them from the bank this afternoon," he explained. "They have been in the bank's custody since they were handed to me, and I must return them to the bank to-night."

"Everything depends upon them, I suppose?"

"Everything."

"But I thought that it was a deed—just one paper?" she said, her face falling.

"The actual instrument is a deed. This one!" He took it from the series when he had untied the packet. "The other papers are of value as corroboration. They are letters, original letters, bearing on the preparation of the agreement. They were found all together as they are now, and in the same order. I did not disclose the letters to Audley, or to his lawyer, because I had not then gone through them; nor was it necessary to disclose them. I have since examined them, and they provide ample proof of the genuineness of the deed."

"So that you think . . . ?"

"I do not think that it can be contested. I am sure that it cannot—with success. And if it be admitted, your opponent's case is gone. It was practically common ground in the former suit that if this agreement could be produced and proved his claim fell to the ground. Yours remains. I do not suppose," Basset concluded, "that he will contest it, save as a matter of form."

"I am sorry for him," she said thoughtfully. And almost for the first time her eyes met his. But he was not responsive. He shrugged his shoulders. "He has had it long enough to feel the loss of it," she continued, still bidding for his sympathy. "May I look at that now—the deed?" She held out her hand.

He gave it to her. It was a folded sheet of parchment, yellow with age and not very large, perhaps ten inches square. Three or four seals of green wax on ends of ribbon dangled from it. It was written all over in a fine and curious penmanship, its initial letter adorned with a portrait of Queen Anne; it was altogether a pretty and