

Introduction.

became possessed, under the existing law, of all the property to which his wife was then or might at any future time become entitled. Three weeks later Mrs. Butterfield made a call on the married couple, who were occupying a small house in Loughborough Park Road. She was not altogether satisfied with what she saw, but the meeting passed off without any apparent friction. The next day she received two letters, from her daughter and son-in-law respectively, requesting her not to come to the house again. After that date she never saw her daughter alive. In the spring of the following year she heard that Harriet had given birth to a boy, but no announcement of the fact was made to her by the parents, who shortly afterwards quitted Loughborough Park Road, and left no address behind them. Rumours reached Mrs. Butterfield, however, with regard to the conduct of Louis Staunton towards the girl Alice Rhodes, and she began to make inquiries of the Hincksmans, which brought down upon her, in January, 1877, a furious letter from Louis, denouncing her, in his wife's name and his own, for unnatural conduct. A chance meeting with Alice Rhodes at a London railway station a week or two later only served to increase her anxiety. Alice refused at first to tell her what had become of the Louis Stauntons, but eventually declared that they were living at Brighton, which Mrs. Butterfield subsequently discovered to be untrue; she also added that Harriet had been very ill, and Mrs. Butterfield recognised a brooch she was wearing as being one of the latter's favourite trinkets.

Though still unable to obtain definite information of her daughter's whereabouts, Mrs. Butterfield ascertained that the Patrick Stauntons were living at Cudham, and thither she went on the 5th of March. As she was taking her ticket she came across Patrick Staunton. He denied all knowledge as to where her daughter was living, and was most abusive to her. On alighting at Halstead station, some 5 miles from Cudham, she learnt that Mr. Louis Staunton occupied a farm in the neighbouring village called Little Grays. She drove there at once in a cab, and found Louis and Mrs. Patrick Staunton in the parlour. They would give her no tidings of her daughter, and she was finally hustled