

his theory. The point is how to see her and be thrown with her for the necessary few days."

"Why does n't he get on the train and go to Hunston? Or, if Mrs. Carstairs is really so decent about the thing, why does n't she get on the train and bring Mary down here?"

"Good. I put both of those up to him, and they seemed to embarrass him a little. I gathered that he had suggested them both to Mrs. Carstairs, and that she had turned them down hard. The ground seemed delicate. You see, we must allow for the personal equation in all this. No matter where they met, he could n't hang around the house getting acquainted with Mary without coming into sort of intimate contact with Mrs. Carstairs, and giving a kind of domestic touch to their relations. You see how that is. She wants to be fair and generous about it, but if she is in love with him, that would be a little more than flesh and blood could bear, I suppose. Then, as I say, there is the pig-headedness of the child. Anyway, Uncle Elbert assures me that both those plans are simply out of the question. So there is the situation. Mary won't come to see him by herself. Mrs. Carstairs won't bring Mary to see him, and she won't let him come to see Mary. Well, what remains?"

Peter said nothing. In a room overhead a manifestly improvised quartet struck up "Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot?" with great enthusiasm.

"You see there is only one thing. The old gentleman," said Varney, "has brooded over the matter till it's broken him all up. He was in bed when I was