

to reason and to plead with the sons of men. He warned you that if you refused to have mercy upon the firstborn of the gipsy-woman, your firstborn should never inherit your name or your fortune ; and as you accepted His challenge, so I believe He will abide by His Word."

Sir Conrad groaned.

"And you must bear the consequences of my sin! Is that just?"

"The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children even unto the third and fourth generation."

"But what about Eileen?" interrupted Lady Clayton. "Will she be content to let the matter die out, and to forego her rights; or shall you never tell her the secret?"

"I shall tell her the secret," Mark said; "and ask her to decide what course we ought to pursue."

"But I thought that you had already decided."

"So I have, Lady Clayton. But she also must decide, and her decision will be the same as mine."

"How do you know that?"

"Because I know her."

"But I don't see how you can decide beforehand, and yet let her decide," argued Griselda.

"It is like the old conflict between Free Will and Predestination, isn't it?" replied Mark; "which really wasn't a conflict at all, if only men had come a little nearer to the truth and so reconciled the two. I tell you candidly that if Eileen wishes it, I will tell my mother the whole story to-morrow, and stand before the world as your son. But she will no more wish it than the sunshine will freeze us, or than God's blessing will be turned into the devil's curse."

For the first time during the interview, Sir Conrad broke into a smile.

"That is your old dodge, Stillingfleet: by expecting people to do what is right, you make them do it. You will