

sometimes I almost think she's in her second childhood to hear her babble as she does—there's no other word for it—simply babble.”

“Babble, babble, little brook,” idiotically murmured Minnie, with a pair of garden scissors between her teeth, and both hands full of tangled string.

“Here, I'll hold that for you. No, no, not the string—the scissors. Give them to me, Minnie, you'll break your teeth if you do that. Very well—but you're only getting it into a muddle. What was I saying?—oh, about Sybil. Poor dear! One of the reasons that made me come here was the thought of having her for a neighbour. We were the greatest of friends, as girls, though there's nearly ten years between us. There might be twenty, now. Minnie, whatever happens, I do pray and trust that I shall never die at the top first, as they say. If you see any tendency to garrulous old age, you must tell me so in good time. It's much the truest kindness in the long run. One would so much rather spend one's last few years silently.”

“A few more years shall roll,” was the thoughtful response of Miss Blandflower, as she gave a final pull to the string and scissors entanglement which succeeded in blending them all inextricably together for the rest of the afternoon.

Bertie, in spite of her strictures on the wanderings of Lady Argent's mind, was not deterred from frequently crossing the valley in search of her. She always told Rosamund vigorously that she liked the walk.

“So kind of you, Bertie dear,” her hostess murmured gratefully, “because you know how much I love seeing you, and the pony is so very old one can't take him out often—especially with the bridge at the very furthest end of the village, as it is—so exceedingly inconvenient. It used to make poor dear Fergus so angry, but, of course, one knows perfectly well that this is only one house, whereas a whole village is a whole village—and was here first, besides.”

“You ought to have a ferry.”

“My dear, I never go down to the edge of the river without thinking of St. Christopher—you know what I

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