

upon an idea promptly, well and good, but if I allow any time to elapse between the idea striking me and my carrying the thing into execution, there is never any saying whether I may not go off in an entirely different groove during the interval."

"And is there any chance of your going off in any other groove now, Atherton?" Mr. Renshaw asked.

"No, I think not; just a remote possibility perhaps, but not more than that. It is so indefinitely small, indeed, that you may—yes, I think you may safely calculate upon my starting on the day I said, or if I find a ship at Wellington going on a trading excursion among the islands, or up to the Straits, or to Japan, I may likely enough take a passage in her."

"But I thought you said that your business required you to be at home, Mr. Atherton?"

"Yes, I suppose that is so, Wilfrid; but I daresay my solicitor would manage it just as well if I did not turn up. Solicitors are people who, as far as I can see, consider it their duty to bother you, but if they find that you pay no attention to their letters they manage somehow or other to get on very well without you. I believe they go into a court and make affidavits, and get an order authorizing them to sign for you. I do not know how it generally is done, but that is my experience of them so far."

Marion had said little that evening, and had indeed been very quiet for the last few days. She was somewhat indignant at Wilfrid's interference in what she considered her affairs, and felt that although her father and mother had said nothing, they too were somewhat disappointed, and would have been glad had she accepted Bob Allen. Besides she had reasons of her own for being out of spirits. After breakfast the next