

Dale was ingenuously sympathetic when he heard of the calamity.

"What's going to happen?" he asked, after he had exhausted his vocabulary of abuse on cats, Providence and Anastasius Papadopoulos. "What's the poor dear going to do?"

"If I am to have any voice in the matter," said I, "she is going to marry me."

He wrung me by the hand enthusiastically and declared that I was the splendidest fellow that ever lived. Then he sighed.

"I am going about like a sheep without a leader. For Heaven's sake, come back into politics. Form a hilarious little party of your own—anything—so long as you're back and take me with you."

"Come to Barbara's Building," said I.

But he made a wry face, and said that he did not think Maisie would like it. I laughed and put my hand on his shoulder.

"My son," said I, "you have a leader already, and she has already tied a blue riband round your woolly neck, and she is pulling you wherever she wants to go. And it's all to the infinite advantage of your eternal soul."

Whereupon he grinned and departed to the sheepfold.

At last Lola came. She begged me not to meet her at the station, but to go round after dinner to Cadogan Gardens.

Dawkins opened the door for me and showed me into the familiar drawing-room. The long summer day was nearing its end, and only a dim twilight came through the open windows. Lola was standing rigid on the hearthrug, her hand shielding the whole of the right side of her face. With the free hand she checked my impetuous advance.

"Stop and look!" she said, and then dropped the shielding hand, and stood before me with twitching lips