

arrive punctually. She was wise in not requiring him to stay at Hexham too long at one time. He had never, he said, 'cared much for country life.' He was a man of town habitudes and occupations. At Bruges, of course, he compelled himself to conform to the altered circumstances of the family. And this, to his credit be it spoken, he managed to do, without loss of cash or self-respect.

However, since the sale of the old Hall and estate, matters had changed wonderfully for the better. With his sons doing well in the Army and Navy, his eldest daughter engaged to a young fellow who was likely to make a figure in the world, and was, moreover, a man of fortune, things were looking up. Why he wanted to go back to Australia, he couldn't understand. Were not England and the Continent good enough for him—for any man? Corisande would have to go too, he supposed. Well, she was a good girl; her place, with her ideas, was with her husband. He didn't approve of wives being in one hemisphere and husbands in another. Didn't work well—not in his experience at any rate. Colonies weren't such bad places either—come to think: the money came from there; and but for it and the man who made it—a gentleman *aux bouts des ongles*—they would all have been stuck at Bruges for years to come. The Hexham family, at any rate, had no right to grumble.

All in good time the more important function connected with Hexham Hall was concluded to