

TRISTRAM OF BLENT

By Anthony Hope

CHAPTER XVIII

CONSPIRATORS AND A CRUX

LORD SOUTHEND was devoted to his wife—a state of feeling natural often, creditable always. Yet the reason people gave for it—and gave with something like an explicit sanction from him—was not a very exalted one. Susanna made him so exceedingly comfortable. She was born to manage an hotel and cause it to pay fifteen per cent. Being a person—not of social importance, nothing could make her that—but of social rank, she was forced to restrict her genius to a couple of private houses. The result was like the light of the lamps in the heroine's boudoir, a soft brilliancy: in whose glamour Susanna's plain face and limited intellectual interests were lost to view. She was also a particularly good woman; but her husband knew better than to talk about that.

Behold him after the most perfect of lunches, his armchair in exactly the right spot, his papers by him, his cigars to his hand (even these Susanna understood), a sense of peace in his heart, and in his head a mild wonder that anybody was discontented with the world. In this condition he intended to

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