

bygones, and was author of a theory which found much acceptance among the villas—namely, that Lady Tristram would consider any reference to her immediate predecessor as inconsiderate, indeed indelicate, and not such as might be expected to proceed from ladylike mouths.

"We must remember that she's a girl, my dear," Miss S. observed to Mrs. Trumbler.

"She must know about it," Mrs. Trumbler suggested. "But I daresay you're right, Miss Swinkerton."

"If such a thing had happened in my family, I should consider myself personally affronted by any reference to the persons concerned."

"The Vicar says he's sadly afraid that the notions of the upper classes on such subjects are very lax."

"Not at all," said Miss S. tartly. Really she needed no instruction from the Vicar. "And as I say, my dear, she's a girl. The ball will mark a new departure. I said so to Madame Zabriskas, and she quite agreed with me."

Mrs. Trumbler frowned pensively. "I suppose Madame Zabriskas has been a widow some time?" she suggested.

"I have never inquired," said Miss S. with an air of expecting applause for a rare discretion.

"I wonder what Mr. Harry will do! The Vicar says he must be terribly upset."

"Oh, I never professed to understand that young man. All I know is that he's going abroad."

"Abroad?"

"Yes, my dear. I heard it in the town, and Madame Zabriskas said she had no doubt it was correct."

"But surely Madame Zabriskas doesn't correspond——?"

"I don't know, my dear. I know what she said." She looked at Mrs. Trumbler and went on with emphasis: "It doesn't do to judge foreigners as we should judge ourselves. If I corresponded with Mr. Tristram it would be one thing; if Madame Zabriskas—and to be sure she has nobody to look after her; that Major is no better than any silly young man—