

Eleanor Faversham comes back I propose to ask her to release me from it."

He drew a long breath. "I'm glad. She's an awfully nice girl, but she's no more in love with you than my mother is. But it'll be rather difficult, won't it?"

"I don't think so," I replied, shaking my head. "It's a question of health. My doctors absolutely forbid it."

A look of affectionate alarm sprang into his eyes. He broke into sympathy. My health? Why had I not told him before? In Heaven's name, what was the matter with me?

"Something silly," said I. "Nothing you need worry about on my account. Only I must go *piano* for the rest of my days. Marriage isn't to be thought of. There is something else I must tell you. I must resign my seat."

"Resign your seat? Give up Parliament? When?"

"As soon as possible."

He looked at me aghast, as if the world were coming to an end.

"We had better concoct an epistle to Raggles this morning."

"But you can't be serious?"

"I can sometimes, my dear Dale. This is one of the afflicting occasions."

"You out of Parliament? You out of public life? It's inconceivable. It's damnable. But you're just coming into your own—what Raggles said, what I told you yesterday. But it can't be. You can hold on. I'll do all the drudgery for you. I'll work night and day."

And he tramped up and down the room, uttering the disconnected phrases which an honest young soul unaccustomed to express itself emotionally blurts out in moments of deep feeling.

"It's no use, Dale," said I, "I've got my marching orders."