

volved in the act of setting the representatives of two rival and uncertain claims to fight it out, tooth and nail together, on the free and open arena of the Court of Probate. It was with a sigh of regret, therefore, that the family attorney, good easy man, drew up the advertisement which closed forever his vain hopes of a disputed succession between the moribund houses of Massinger and Meysey, and confined his possibilities of lucrative litigation to exploiting the house of Massinger alone, for his own use, enjoyment, and fruition.

It was some two or three weeks after Hugh Massinger's tragic death that Edie Relf chanced to observe in the *Agony Column* of that morning's "Times," a notice couched in the following precise and poetical language:—

"Hugh Massinger, Esquire, deceased, late of Whitestrand Hall, in the County of Suffolk.—Any person or persons claiming to represent the heir or heirs-at-law and next of kin of the above-named gentleman (who died at Mentone, in the Department of the Alpes Maritimes, in the French Republic, on or about the 17th day of November last past) are hereby requested to apply immediately to Alfred Heberden, Esq., Whitestrand, Suffolk, solicitor to the said Hugh Massinger."

Edie mentioned the matter at once to Warren, who had come over from France as soon as he had completed the necessary arrangements at San Remo and Mentone; but Warren heard it all with extreme disinclination. He couldn't bear even to allude to the fact in speaking to Elsie. Directly or indirectly, he could never inherit the estate of the man whose life he had been so nearly instrumental in shortening. And if Elsie was soon, as he hoped, to become his wife, he would necessarily participate in whatever benefit Elsie might derive from inheriting the relics of Hugh Massinger's ill-won Whitestrand property.

"No, no," he said. "The estate was simply the price of blood. He married that poor little woman for nothing else but for the sake of Whitestrand. He killed her by slow degrees through his neglect and cruelty. If he hadn't married her, he would never have been master of that wretched place: if he hadn't married her, he would have had nothing of his own to leave to Elsie. I can't