

He spoke quietly, but with the perfect confidence of a man who knew what he was talking about. The Squire heaved a resigned sigh.

"What does Frances say to all this?"

A sunny smile shone through the gravity of Richard's face.

"Ask her," he said. "We both discovered when it was too late that it is best for a husband and wife to be together whatever betide. We shall not likely make the same mistake again."

"Right, quite right," said the Earl's deep bass voice heartily. "You are a manly fellow! I like you, Blake. I have always liked you, and I told your dear wife that just the other day, when it was the darkest hour with her. Your hand—you must come with your wife and that fine little lad of yours to Ellesmere and spend a week before you go."

The Squire had no more to say. Perhaps he remembered only too well how he had stood aloof from his son-in-law when the crash came; how he had almost closed his door against him. And he could not but admire the manliness which Richard displayed now. He had been weak and erring once, but that time was passed. Henceforth, honour would be his watchword, love his beacon light, and he was independent of all the world. Another interesting and momentous conversation took place that night at Kendal Hall in the drawing-room when all the guests had retired to rest and Doctor Harry was alone with his father and mother. He asked them to remain, for he could not bear that Mary Osborne should continue in his father's