

that," he added, with a little shake in his tone, "their justice — their cruel, abominable justice."

Then what was surely a miracle happened. She leaned forward and took his hand. Her eyes were soft with sympathy.

"You poor thing!" she exclaimed. "You couldn't do anything else. I have been thinking it over very seriously. It was a horrible position for you, but you really couldn't do anything else, that I can see. You told your story simply and like a man. But wait. There is one thing I can't understand. Those shares — were they not to be part of that poor man's vengeance. You surely never intended that we should benefit by them in this extraordinary way?"

"I believed them," he told her firmly, "when I sold them to your father, to be, until long after he would have had to pay for them, at any rate, absolutely worthless. The wholly unexpected has happened, as it does often in oil. Your father's shares are worth a fortune. He can realise his idea of clearing Mandeleys. He can dispose of them to-day for three hundred thousand pounds. Lady Letitia, you have come to me like an angel. This is the sweetest thing any woman ever did. Be still kinder. Please make your father keep the shares. They are his. They were sold to ruin him. It is just the chance of something that happened many thousand miles away, which has turned them in his favour. He accepts nothing from me. It is fate only which brings him this windfall."

"I promise," she said. "To tell you the truth, I think father is as much changed, during the last few days, as I am. When I saw him, about an hour ago, and told him that I was coming to see you, I was almost frightened at first. He looks older, and I fancy that something which has happened lately —