realized that the other was perplexed by the same question, while the girl was astonished to find her vague sus-picions shared. While they sat silent, Conel Barrington came in. "I am glad to see you looking so much better, Maud," he said, with a trace of embarrassment. "Courthorne is resting still. Now, I can't help feeling that we have been a trifle more distant than was needful with him. The man has really behaved very discreetly. I mean in verything." This was a great admission, and Miss farrington smiled. "Did it hurt you very much to tell us that?" she asked. The Colonel laughed. "I know what you mean, and if you put me on my mettle I'll retract. After all, it was o great credit to him, because blood will tell, and he is, of course, a Cour-thorne."

Almost without her intention, Maud Barrington's eyes wandered towards the photograph, and then looking up she met those of her aunt, and once more saw the thought that troubled her in them them.

"The Courthorne blood is responsible for a good deal more than discretion," said Miss Barrington, who went out

for a good deal more than discretion," said Miss Barrington, who went out quietly. Her brother appeared a trifle per-plexed. "Now, I fancied your aunt had taken him under her wing, and when I was about to suggest that, considering the connection between the families, we might ask him over to dinner occasion-ally, she goes away," he said. The girl looked down a moment, for, realizing that her uncle recognized the obligation he was under to the man he did not like, she remembered that she herself owed him considerably more and he had asked for something in re-turn. It was not altogether easy to grant, but she had tacitly pledged her-self, and turning suddenly she laid a hand on Barrington's arm. "Of course; but I want to talk of something else just now," she said. "You know I have very seldom asked you questions about my affairs, but I wish to take a little practical interest in them this year." "Yes?" said Barrington, with a smile.

wish to take a little practical interest in them this year." "Yes?" said Barrington, with a smile. "Well, I am at your service, my dear, and quite ready to account for my stew-ardship. You are no longer my ward, except by your own wishes." "I am still your niece," said the girl, patting his arm. "Now, there is, of course, nobody who could manage the farming better than you do, but I would like to raise a large crop of wheat this season." "I twouldn't pay" and the Colonel

season." "It wouldn't pay," and the Colonel grew suddenly grave. "Very few men in the district are going to sow all their holding. Wheat is steadily going down." "Then if nobody sows there will be very little, and shouldn't that put up, the prices?" Barrington's areas twinklod. "Who has

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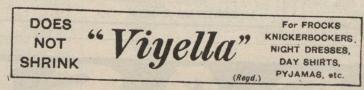


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