

Clive Forrester's Gold

recognised as that of the master of the hounds, called out, 'Good morning, Forrester.'

'Good morning, Sir Robert,' I answered, my heart in my mouth, so to speak, as I turned towards him, for I hoped to see by his side the tall, graceful figure of his daughter on her favourite chestnut. But, alas! I was once more doomed to disappointment—he was alone.

Sir Robert Jocelyn was the head of a large firm of shipowners. He had come into a nice little property in the neighbourhood when he was young, and married the daughter of one of the oldest county families, a sweet, fragile woman, who died some years later, leaving two sons and a daughter, who were now grown up. The latter, Grace Jocelyn, had accompanied her father to the meets ever since she was old enough to sit on her pony, and she and I had had innumerable gallops together in years gone by. Her unaccountable absence that morning seemed to be the crowning point of my ill-fortune.

Whether Sir Robert noticed my look of surprise and consternation I cannot say, but he just remarked, as he rode quickly on, 'Grace's horse went lame, and she had to return for a fresh mount.' Then, as if suspicious of an inclination on my part to hang behind and wait for his daughter, he checked his horse