

CHAPTER II.

A TRUST.

THE Castle of Compton was not wholly deserted, for in the past a caretaker occupied some chambers at the southern corner of it. Thomasin Hatherley's tenure dated back to memories already more than a generation old; for after long and worthy service with the Baskervilles — latter-day Lords of the Manor — she had been rewarded with this sinecure, and since dwelt very comfortably at Compton. Evidences of splendour marked the rooms rendered habitable for a caretaker's needs, and in chambers, lofty and airy for the time of their erection, the widow Hatherley dwelt with a grandchild, and a brother some twenty years younger than herself. So at least the relationship obtaining between these three persons was understood by all men, from Sir Archer Baskerville, Squire of the Marltons, downward. Sibella Hatherley ministered to her aged grandmother, did the necessary work