

much older and wiser and more experienced than he, even though she was about to ask his advice.

He glanced down upon her little bent brown head, and the glance was not untender; in fact, it was as near a caress as a glance could be; but Jeanne did not see it, and it did not trouble Uncle Roberts in the least that she should not know how kindly he thought of her; probably he thought it would have been bad for her to learn the extent of his fatherly affection for her and her brother.

Then he smoked in peace, and had Jeanne not made haste to break the silence, he would have fallen sleep, as he usually did after supper, taking a nap in his armchair as a kind of preliminary canter before going to bed.

"Uncle Roberts, you used to say you meant to go to London some day to see all the sights."

"Aye," said Uncle Roberts, very placidly, "so I do."

"Couldn't you come now?"

"What?"

"Couldn't you come now, at once? It seems to me it would be a very good time to come. Since Aunt Caroline's death," hinted Jeanne delicately, "life seems to me to have grown so very uncertain."

Uncle Roberts, with some uneasiness, assured her that he felt as well as ever he did in his life, and she hastened to apologise.

"I was not exactly thinking of *that*. But there I am, Uncle Roberts, all alone in that big house."

"I thought you said there was fifteen servants."

"I mean—not counting the servants."

"Jenny," said Uncle Roberts, "never let me hear you say you don't count servants. Ain't they flesh and blood the same as you be? This is what comes of riches. Flesh and blood is nothing. Fellow creatures is nothing."

"Oh, uncle, indeed you misunderstand. They are very far from being nothing. It is I who am nobody in the house, and, if anything, frightened to death of them all."