

when at last Johnson had softly closed the door. "It oppresses me!"

"So it does me," said Eustace; "and I tell you what it is, Gussie," he went on, putting his arm round her, "I won't stand having all these infernal fellows hanging round me. I shall sell this place, and go in for something quieter."

And at that moment there came a dreadful diversion. Suddenly, and without the slightest warning, the doors at either end of the room opened. Through the one came two enormous footmen laden with coffee and cream, etc., and through the other Johnson and another powdered monster bearing cognac and other liquors. And there was Augusta with Eustace's arm round her, absolutely too paralysed to stir. Just as the men came up she got away somehow, and stood looking like an idiot, while Eustace coloured to his eyes. Indeed, the only people who showed no confusion were those magnificent menials, who never turned a single powdered hair, but went through their solemn rites with perfectly unabashed countenances.

"I can't stand this," said Augusta, feebly, when they had at length departed. "I am going to bed; I feel quite faint."

"All right," said Eustace, "I think that it is the best thing to do in this comfortless shop. Confound that fellow, Short, why couldn't he come and dine? I wonder if there is any place where one could go to smoke a pipe, or rather a cigar—I suppose those fellows would despise me if I smoked a pipe? There was no smoking allowed here in my uncle's time, so I used to smoke in the house-keeper's room; but I can't do that now"——