

right. Good-evening, John. Some other evening we hope to have the pleasure—at least once before we leave Denmark Hill. Good-bye just now."

She had quite the *grande dame* manner, and Rodney looked round rather helplessly, sure that some strange, new, and quite unwelcome force had entered into their lives for the sole purpose of disturbing and complicating them.

He was unambitious himself; he had never asked more from fortune than just immunity from sordid care and the wherewithal to make his dear ones happy and comfortable. A bit of a philosopher in his way, he had been known to remark to John Glide that the middle of the highway was the happiest and the safest place, and that the greatest jewel within the reach of humanity was contentment.

Estelle, passing through the hall with part of the supper equipage, was surprised to behold Glide being helped into his overcoat by his devoted ally Jack.

"Are you going before supper, John? Don't—it's just coming in," she said kindly.

"It is better that I should go, Miss Estelle," he replied in a lowered voice. "You will see that, I am sure. This is a private and family occasion."

"Oh, but I think we always feel that you are one of us," she said, smiling in her friendly fashion. "Well, if you must go—good-bye; but I don't like it—I don't like it at all," she added. "It is such a long time since you were here before. You used to come quite often once upon a time."

"Once upon a time!" repeated Glide, and his smile was slightly melancholy.

But Estelle's warm hand-clasp sent him comforted on his way. It seemed to promise in the future all that the past had held, and it certainly indicated no abatement of her sisterly regard.