

benefit of our country readers, it may be explained that the space indicated is a slight elevation on the north side of Regent's Park.) Thus encouraged, the men pressed onwards and upwards; as the first line arrived the enemy turned tail and ran."

I'll take the newspaper cutting from you, my dear; and now I am going to skip—let me see, how many years shall we say? Over twenty, I am afraid. About the space that your life has lasted, up to the present. Yes, the spring of eighty.

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In the spring of eighty I was living in a boarding house in Powis Square, Bayswater, with my boy of ten who, my dear, afterwards became your father. I had married, when I was eighteen years old, a cousin, and I had not been called upon to change my name; some of the other boarders, in introducing me to friends, called me in an impressive way, Mrs. Captain Bickerstaffe. My husband was in the Artillery. He had gone to India where there had been fighting of sorts since November of seventy-eight. About a year later—you learnt about it at school, but you hadn't the same excuse for fixing it all on your memory that I had—ten months later, Cavagnari and the men with him were murdered at Cabul. I recollect what a start and a shock it gave to us in London when the news came.

"I'm sorry for you, Mrs. Bickerstaffe," said the proprietress of the boarding house, "and it's hard on your little son, but you see we've got to avenge this business, and I only hope your good gentleman will be kept safe and sound, well away from all the trouble. I can understand what your feelings are in that respect."

"I am not certain that I do," I said.

"You don't want him to be killed, do you?"

"Although he is my husband, I don't want him to be killed."

"Sometimes," she remarked, in a puzzled way, "I can't quite make out what you are driving at."

"Occasionally I am not certain myself. In the present instance my desire is that my husband may have the