

the evidence, the joke of every man in the street would be to the effect that Priam Farll, rather than marry the skinny spinster, had pretended to be dead.

"You see," Mr. Oxford added to him, "the important point about Lady Sophia's evidence is that in Paris she saw both you and your valet—the valet obviously a servant, and you obviously his master. There can, therefore, be no question of her having been deceived by the valet posing as the master. It is a most fortunate thing that by a mere accident I got on the tracks of Lady Sophia in time. In the nick of time. Only yesterday afternoon!"

No reference by Mr. Oxford to Priam's obstinacy in the matter of collars. He appeared to regard Priam's collar as a phenomenon of nature, such as the weather, or a rock in the sea, as something to be accepted with resignation! No sign of annoyance with Priam! He was the prince of diplomats, was Mr. Oxford.

"Can I speak to you a minute?" said Lady Sophia to Priam.

Mr. Oxford stepped away with a bow.

And Lady Sophia looked steadily at Priam. He had to admit again that she was stupendous. She was his capital mistake; but she was stupendous.

At their last interview he had embraced her. She had attended his funeral in Westminster Abbey. And she could suppress all that from her eyes! She could stand there calm and urbane in her acceptance of the terrific past. Apparently she forgave.