

my mission," continued Drewitt. "I postponed it until this afternoon, just as I always keep an olive to flavour my coffee. I confess I had been looking forward to the interview. Even Hoskins this morning noted my unwonted cheerfulness and enquired if I were unwell. You must meet Hoskins, Lola, he and Providence between them are responsible for me. Providence for my coming, Hoskins for my being."

"But——" began Lola.

"Hush!" warned Beresford. "With Drew silence is the only extractor."

Drewitt looked reproachfully at Beresford. A moment later he continued.

"I left the Aunt at the parting of the religious ways," he announced.

"Whatever do you mean?" cried Lola.

"Hitherto she has always shown herself a good churchwoman, blindly accepting the decrees of Providence, provided they did not interfere with her own plans," he added. "To-day she is asking why I and not her dear Richard inherited the barony of Drewitt and all its beery traditions."

Lola looked from one to the other, and then laughed.

"When I arrived the Aunt was explaining to the Vultures—I should explain, Lola, that the Vultures are Edward Seymour and Cecily, his wife—how she had always felt that Richard would be saved by the Challice independence. Richard will explain these little family details to you later," he smiled. "As