

good fruit in due season; and Elsie did at last, in name at least, inherit the manor and estate of Whitestrand.

But neither of them touched one penny of the blood-money. They kept it all apart as a sacred fund, to be used only in the best way they knew for the objects that Winifred in her highest moods might most have approved of.

And this, as Elsie justly remarked, was really the very best possible arrangement. To be sure, she no longer felt that shy old feeling against coming to Warren unprovided and penniless. She was content now, as a wife should be, to trust herself implicitly and entirely to her husband's hands. Warren's art of late had every day been more sought after by those who hold in their laps the absolute disposal of the world's wealth, and there was far less fear than formerly that the cares of a household would entail on him the miserable and degrading necessity for lowering his own artistic standard to meet the inferior wishes and tastes of possible purchasers, with their vulgar ideals. But it was also something for each of them to feel that the other had thus been seriously tried by the final test of this world's gold—tried in actual practice and not found wanting. Few pass through that sordid crucible unscathed: those that do are of the purest metal.

On the very day when Warren and Elsie finally fixed the date for their approaching wedding, the calm and happy little bride-elect came in with first tidings of the accomplished arrangement, all tremors and blushes, to her faithful Edie. To her great chagrin, however, her future sister-in-law received the news of this proximate family event with an absolute minimum of surprise or excitement. "You don't seem to be in the least astonished, dear," Elsie cried, somewhat piqued at her cool reception. "Why anybody'd say, to see the way you take it, you'd known it all a clear twelvemonth ago!"

"So I did, my child—all except the mere trifling detail of the date," Edie answered at once with prompt common-sense, and an arch look from under her dark eyebrows. "In fact, I arranged it all myself most satisfactorily beforehand. But what I was really thinking of just now was simply this—why shouldn't one cake do duty for both at once, Elsie?"