

"And this morning?"

"Oh, it does not open until ten. Here is the coffee at last. You will allow me——"

"No, no! Oh please, pardon! But to see a gentleman fatigue himself with such work for women! It is not fair. And besides——"

She looked up at him with marked hesitation, a request clearly written upon every line of her colourless face. Guy could do no less than help her to bring out the rest of the sentence.

"Besides——"

"Well, I have a curiosity. I want so much to see that famous cheque of Mrs. Brookes'. Twelve thousand pounds! Ah, to think of spending it with one or two strokes of the pen! You take milk, Mr. Ryder?"

Guy's bewilderment was momentarily growing. But he really could think of no reason for refusing so slight a favour. Unclasping his pocket-book he took out the slip of paper and placed it before her. Helen caught it up, and examined it with an air of childlike amusement and curiosity.

"I am not poor—me!" she said. "But I never saw a piece of paper worth so much quite before. Caryl, behold!"

It fluttered across the white tablecloth in the direction of Mr. Clive, who carelessly took it up between his finger and thumb.

"What queer creatures the dear women are!" he remarked, laughingly, to the other man. "Helen, have you noticed, my dear, how this bank prints little tiny words all over the paper? No? Come to the window, and you can see."

"It is clever," she said, after a moment. "You, Mr. Ryder, have observed it before?" turning her head to speak over her shoulder to Guy, still employed with his coffee cup and standing by the table.

"Often. Ah, there is ten striking! It is not often that I am so late at breakfast, but I was detained in church after the early service."

"And we must hinder you now no

longer," quite sweetly from Helen. "Here is the cheque. Thank you for showing it to me so kindly. I must fly to my friend at the Villa, who will lament herself at my too long absence. And you, Caryl——"

"I have an engagement in town. You go to finish this business at your bank, Mr. Ryder? Then we can walk part of the road together," watching Guy—who had seized a pen, and was endorsing the cheque—with a peculiar smile.

"Why not the whole way? Then I would give you the notes upon the spot," he answered. "The Bank has had notice of the sum needed, so there will be no delay."

Caryl, however, shook his head.

"My engagements prevent. But if you allow I will call here upon my way back—say at twelve o'clock. Then the little affair will be quite off your mind."

At noon it was, therefore, that the Curate paid over to Caryl Clive ten of the twelve crisp, new notes, each of the value of one thousand pounds, which he had previously received over the bank counter, and of which two already stood to his own credit. There was a gleam of intense satisfaction upon the generally impassive face of the man who clutched at the small packet that Guy tendered, and he shook the clergyman's hand violently as he said, "So glad of your able assistance. But I cannot now wait. Life is all one hurry. Adieu!"

"I will have a receipt though, please," said Guy, secretly regarding himself as a miracle of prudence.

Upon which Clive sat down and scrawled an informal acknowledgment upon half a sheet of paper.

"I can't stop to do better now," he declared.

He was actually outside before he had finished speaking. And when Guy, who was, unhappily, not blessed with much idea of business, had written a note to Mrs. Brookes, in which he detailed the arrangement upon which he had entered, and declared himself