

"Which, as you probably very well know, I have not been called for fifteen years!"

Still the intense perplexity of her face was staggering his impression that this adventurous daughter of his disinherited son was trying by a *coup de main* to cancel the edict of banishment, and to obtain favour and fortune at his hands.

"*You* my grandfather!" she reiterated, mechanically, her eyes, wonder wide, staring at the old man with child-like directness, that produced a more convincing effect on his mind than any words. After all, it was quite possible she might not have heard of his succession to a remote peerage, and this amazement was certainly not assumed. Moreover, the expression of her face was conjuring from a dim past a host of memories. He became strangely moved, and could scarcely bear the gaze which recalled so forcibly Theodore in his youth.

Which made the first movement neither knew. "My dearest little girl!" he murmured, and folded her in his arms.

Bluebell was weak and silent from surprise mingled with extreme happiness, and Lord Bromley had gone back in thought to former years, and dare not trust himself to speak; so they were both too absorbed to notice the entrance of Harry Dutton, who remained rooted to the spot (like a stuck pig, as he afterwards elegantly described it), and a smothered exclamation burst from his lips.

Lord Bromley hurriedly withdrew himself from Bluebell, not particularly gratified at being surprized in so romantic a *pose* at his time of life.

"What the d——l are you doing here, sir?" he angrily demanded.

Harry, considering he had quite as good a right to ask that question, turned inquiringly and gloomily to Bluebell, who, feeling if she attempted to open her lips she must either go off into a hysterical fit of laughter or burst into tears, said nothing; and the uncle and nephew continued to glare at each other.

She signed to Dutton to speak; but he was too mystified and sulky; so Bluebell, in desperation, plunged in *medias res*.

"Harry!" she cried, "this is my grandfather as well as your uncle! Why, we must be cousins!" Then, after an instant's pause, with downcast eyes and crimson cheeks, she penitently