

once been Tristram of Blent and had ceased to be such in a puzzling manner.

As he looked back, he seemed to himself to have lived hitherto on the banks of the river of life as well of the river Blent; there had been no need of swimming. But he was in the current now; he must swim or sink. This idea took shape as he watched the carriages, the lines of scampering hansom, the crowds waiting at theatre doors. Every man and every vehicle, every dandy and every urchin, represented some effort, if it were only at one end of the scale to be magnificent, at the other not to be hungry. No such notions had been fostered by days spent on the banks of the Blent. "What shall I do? What shall I do?" The question hummed in his brain as he walked about. There were such infinite varieties of things to do, such a multitude of people doing them. To some men this reflection brings despair or bewilderment; to Harry (as indeed Lord Southend would have expected from his observation of him) it was a titillating evidence of great opportunities, stirring his mind to a busy consideration of chances. Thus then it seemed as though Blent might fall into the background, his loved Blent. Perhaps his not thinking of it had begun in wilfulness, or even in fear; but he found the rule he had made far easier to keep than he had ever expected. There had been a sort of release for his mind; he had not foreseen this as a possible result of his great sacrifice. He even felt rather richer; which seemed a strange paradox, till he reflected that the owners of Blent had seldom been able to lay hands readily on a fluid sum of fifteen thousand pounds, subject to no claims for houses to be repaired, buildings to be maintained, cottages to be built, wages to be paid, and the dozen other ways in which money disperses itself over the surface of a landed estate. He had fifteen thousand pounds in form as good as cash. He was living more or less as he had once meant to live in this one particular; he was living with a respectable if not a big cheque by him, ready for any emergency which might arise—an emergency not