

"Oh, I don't know," she murmured despondently. "He hates me, but if he's offered Blent and me he'll—he'll take us both, Mina, you know he will." An indignant rush of colour came on her cheeks. "Oh, it's very easy for you!"

In a difficulty of that sort it did not seem that even Mr. Disney could be of much avail.

"Oh, you Tristrams!" cried Mina in despair.

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE MATTER OF BLINKHAMPTON

PITY for the commander who, while engaging the enemy on his front with valour and success, breaking his line and driving him from his position, finds himself assailed in the rear by an unexpected or despised foe and the prize of victory suddenly wrenched from him! His fate is more bitter than if he had failed in his main encounter, his self-reproaches more keen.

Major Duplay was awakening to the fact that this was his situation. Triumph was not his although Harry Tristram had fled from the battle. Iver's carefully guarded friendliness and the touch of motherly compassion in his wife's manner, Mrs. Trumbler's tacit request (conveyed by a meek and Christian sympathy) that he should bow to the will of Providence, Miss S.'s malicious questions as to where he meant to spend the winter after leaving Merrion, told him the opinion of the world. Janie Iver had begun to think flirtation wrong; and there was an altogether new and remarkable self-assertion about Bob Broadley. The last thing annoyed Duplay most. It is indeed absurd that a young man, formerly of a commendable humility, should think a change of demeanour justified merely because one young woman, herself insignificant, chooses for reasons good or bad to favour him. Duplay assumed to despise Bob; it is often better policy to despise people than to enter into competition with them, and it is always rash to do