

The Intriguer

son to sit in his place after him, yet when death should strike him all that he had been would remain vital in this daughter.

In spite of the fact that directness was the first quality in the nature of Margaret Garnett, I thought she approached the subject in question with trepidation. She did not ask me for the story of the conference. She drew out, rather, here and there a feature of it by some subtle query, put inconsequently in the course of our talk. I have seen an expert counsel touch thus delicately on a matter which he feared to draw wholly out, and yet of which he must know the essential features. It was like one putting forth a hand gently in the dark, when the electric light switch was on the wall by his shoulder. A method peculiar, but not exclusively peculiar, to a woman.

Presently, when she knew in general what had happened, her face took on virile firmness.

"Courtlandt," she said, "you are evidently not a poet, or else you would see how deplorable a thing it would be to spoil this struggle between my father and Mr. Wood. The Titans are mostly dead. It is an age of quibbling over the fractions of per cent. Only now and then does a heroic figure rise, and more rarely does such a one find an equal standing in his way. Then, for that straining hour, is the world worth living in. Events are marshalled and swung crashing into each other. Men are trod on like flies. Things called valuable, things called precious, are heaped up for a moment's barrier, like the discarded