

'I never heard of the place. One of those new springs which doctors are always developing, no doubt. Every man has his own particular fad in the way of a watering place. And you are really going to-morrow?'

'To-morrow I shall be gone.'

'Alas, how shall I live without you?' she sighed, with the prettiest, easiest, skin-deep sentiment, which wounded him almost more than her disdain could have done. 'At least I must have all your society till you are gone. You must dine with me and share my opera box. 'Don Giovanni' is an opera of which one can never have too much, and a new soprano is to be the Zerlina, a South American girl of whom great things are expected.'

'Is Mr. Champion at home?'

'No, he is in Antwerp. There is something important going on there—something to do with railways. You know how he rushes about. I shall have no one but my cousin, Mrs Gresham, whom you know of old, the Essex vicar's lively wife. We shall be almost *tete-à-tete*. I shall expect you at eight o'clock.'

'I will be punctual. What a threatening day,' he said, looking up at the gathering darkness which gave a wintry air to the summer foliage. 'There must be a storm coming.'

'Evidently. I think I had better go home. Will you take me to my carriage?'

'Let me get you some tea, at least, before you go.'

They strolled across the grass to the leafy tent. A good many people had left, scared by the thunder clouds. Lady Fridoline had deserted her post in the portico, tired of saying good-bye; and was taking a hasty cup of tea amidst a little knot of intimates. She was lamenting the non-arrival of someone.

'So shameful to disappoint me, after distinctly promising to be here,' she said.

'Who is the defaulter, dear Lady Fridoline?' asked Mrs. Champion.

'Mr. Jermyn, the new thought reader.'