

"Oh Cecilia, not really," cried Jeanne, without pausing to consider whether this item were more likely to be accurate than the rest of Cecilia's intelligence.

"No wonder, when the others are such fine athletic men," said Cecilia, tossing her head. "I saw one of them play in a cricket match once. That is why I inquired all about the family. Lord Brian something was his name."

"But he was not born with a club foot," said Jeanne, bethinking herself. "He fell downstairs in this very house, and injured his spine—when he was a little boy. And Cecilia, I think you must be mistaken, for nothing could be more friendly than his mother's manner to him when I saw them together."

"Do you know the Duchess?" This time the jealousy in Cecilia's voice was unmistakable.

"I can't say I *know* her, but I have been to her house—to an At Home; and she left a card here, but she did not ask to come in," said scrupulous Jeanne.

"Well, then of course you know her. I wish you would get *me* an invitation to her house," said Cecilia. "Bless me, Jeanne, if only I had your opportunities I should be at the top of the tree in no time, and know every one in London."

"I thought you had so many friends."

"I said—'of a kind,'" said Cecilia, discontentedly. "And I have trouble enough to keep even them together. I wasted a guinea on that announcement in the *Morning Post*, hoping it would bring in a few invitations; and all that came of it was a shoal of letters for Joseph, which he won't let me so much as open."

She looked enviously round the music-room, into which Jeanne now conducted her.

"All these pictures must be worth a mint of money. You will see, Joseph will go straight to look at them the instant he comes up here, and we shall get no more fun out of him at all. However, there will be the Duke for you and me to talk to. It is a pity he is so young. Do you see much of him,