

door on them, knowing them to be safe till morning. Of late much anxiety had been hers on account of her eldest son, who ought to have been his father's right hand and comfort now that he was weighed down by heavy Parliamentary duties which were a drain on all his energies as well as his means. Walter Bremner had lived to see all his political ambitions fulfilled, and, while he took the keen joy of a born politician and a good fighter in his Parliamentary life, there were times when he doubted whether it was, after all, worth the many sacrifices it entailed. His wife's health had not of late permitted her to stand the strain of London life, and he had been for three months alone in a London Club—which to a home-loving man is a sacrifice of no mean kind.

He was at home now for Easter, but was dining at the house of a neighbouring magnate; the young men of the house were in the billiard-room, and Mrs. Bremner was with her daughters, Adair and Jessie. The elder had been baptised Florence Adair, but had never been called anything but Adair, sometimes Addie. The former name suited her well. She was tall and stately, with a certain reserve of manner and suggestion of hidden power which made her interesting to those skilled in the reading of character. Of all his children she was the most interesting, perhaps the dearest, in her father's eyes. The love between them was a wonderful thing, of a depth and intensity which they hardly realised.

His son Laurence, upon whom he had built his early hopes, had bitterly disappointed him. His abilities were mediocre, and he had a lazy, sometimes his father feared a vicious, strain in him. He was a cad at heart. In his case public school training