

of course, he did not accept the offer, he recognized her intention, and was grateful to her. Was it not enough occupation for him to watch the effect on this ingenuous mind of the new wonders that she saw, as they went on to Schaffhausen, and the Tyrol, and Verona, and Venice?

In their hotel at Venice, Balfour ran against a certain Captain Courtenay, with whom he had a slight acquaintance. They had a chat in the evening in the smoking-room.

'Seen Major Blythe lately?' said Balfour, among other things.

'No,' answered the other, somewhat coldly.

'You don't know, I suppose,' asked Balfour, quite unconcernedly, 'how that business at the C—— Club came off?'

The young man with the fair mustache eyed him narrowly. It is not a safe thing to tell a man evil things of his relatives, unless you know how they stand with regard to each other.

'Yes, I do know—eh—an unfortunate business—very. Fact is, Blythe wouldn't explain. I suppose there was some delay about the posting of that letter; and—and—I have no doubt that he would have paid the money next day if he had not been bullied about it. You see, a man does not like to be challenged in that way, supposing he has made a trifling mistake—'

'Yes,' said Balfour, nodding his head in acquiescence; 'but how was it settled?'

'Well,' said the other, with some embarrassment, 'the fact is—well, the committee, don't you know, had to enforce the rules—and he wouldn't explain—and, in fact, he got a hint to resign—'

'Which he took, of course.'

'I believe so.'

Balfour said nothing further; but in his mind he coupled a remark or two with the name of Major the Honorable Stephen Blythe which that gentleman would have been startled to hear.

Then he went up stairs to the sitting-room, and found Lady Sylvia at the open case-ment, looking out on the clear, blue-green, lambent twilight.

'Well, good wife,' said he, gayly, 'are you beginning to think of trudging home now? We ought to see a little of The Lilacs before all the leaves are gone. And there won't be much to keep me in London

now, I fancy; they are getting more and more certain that the government won't bring on the dissolution before the new year.'

She rose, and put a hand on each of his shoulders, and looked up into his face with grateful and loving eyes.

'That is so kind of you, Hugh. It will be so pleasant for us to get to know what home really is—after all these hotels. And you will be in time for the pheasants: I know several people will be so glad to have you.'

Of course the merest stranger would be delighted to have so distinguished a person as Mr. Balfour come and shoot his pheasants for him; failing that, would she not herself, like a loyal and dutiful wife, go to her few acquaintances 'down there and represent to them the great honor they might have of entertaining her husband?

'I see there is to be a demonstration on the part of the agricultural laborers,' said he, 'down in Somersetshire. I should like to see that—I should like to have a talk with some of their leaders. But I am afraid we could not get back in time.'

'My darling,' she protested, seriously, 'I can start at five minutes' notice. We can go to-night, if you wish.'

'Oh no, it isn't worth while,' said he, absently. And then he continued: 'I'm afraid your friends the clergymen are making a mistake as regards that question. I don't know who these leaders are; I should like to know more precisely their character and aims; but it will do no good to call them agitators, and suggest that they should be ducked in horse-ponds—'

'It is infamous!' said Lady Sylvia. She knew nothing whatever about it. But she would have believed her husband if he had told her that St. Mark's was made of green cheese.

'I mean that it is unwise,' said he, without any enthusiasm. 'Christ meant His church to be the church of the poor. The rich man has a bad time of it in the Gospels. And you may depend on it that if you produce among the poorer classes the feeling that the Church of England is on the side of the rich—is the natural ally of the squires, landlords, and other employers—you are driving them into the hands of the Dissenters, and hastening on the dis-establishment.'

'And serve them right too,' said she,