

"I remember all about it. The old lady I carried upstairs. Well—didn't you believe *then* it was all up with Sir Adrian's eyesight? I did."

"My dear!—how you do overstate things! Shall I ever persuade you to be accurate? We were all much alarmed about him, and with reason. But I for one always did believe, and always shall believe, that there was immense exaggeration. People do get so excited over these things, and make mountains out of molehills."

The gentleman said:—"H'm!"

"Well!" said the lady convincingly. "All I say is—see how well his eyes are now!"

The gentleman seemed only half convinced, at best. "There was something *rum* about it," said he. "You'll admit that?"

"It depends entirely on what you mean by 'rum.' Of course, there was something a little singular about so sudden a recovery, if that is what you mean."

"Suppose we make it 'a little singular'! I've no objection."

The interest of the main topic must have superseded the purely academical issue. For the lady appeared disposed towards a recapitulation in detail of the incidents referred to. "Gwen went away to Vienna with her mother in the middle of January," said she. "And . . . . No—I'm not mistaken. I'm sure I'm right! Because when we came back from Languedoc in June there was not a word of any such thing. And Lord Ancester never breathed as much as a hint. And he certainly *would* have, under the circumstances. Why don't you speak and agree with me, or contradict me, instead of puffing?"

"Well, my love," said the gentleman apologetically, "you see, my interpretation of your meaning has to be—as it were—constructive. However, I believe it to be accurate, this time. If I understand you rightly . . . ."

"And you have no excuse for not doing so. For I am sure that what I did say was as clear as daylight."

"Exactly. It is perfectly true that, when we went to Grosvenor Square in June, Tim said nothing about recovery. In fact, as I remember it—only eighteen years is a longish time, you know, to recollect things—he was regularly down in the mouth about the whole concern. I always believed, myself, that he would sooner have had Adrian for Gwen, on any terms, by that time—sooner than she should marry the Hapsburg, certainly. Not that he believed that Gwen was going to cave out!"