

He stopped, fancying Caroline had come into the room again. Miss Kendal re-assured him.

"Then, you know, after the first shock, I began to consider that, although this part of my property was gone, I still had Redwood. And though I wished Redwood to descend intact to a Hesketh, and used to have some sort of pride about the estate going with the name, there were some other considerations that swamped all that at once. Don't you understand? I couldn't leave *her* future doubtful or precarious, for all the family pride in Christendom."

"And that's a great deal," observed his listener. "My dear, sir, I appreciate your feeling, believe me. Most men, I'm afraid, would sooner sacrifice their religion, to say nothing of a niece or two, than offer a slight to the smallest corner of their escutcheon."

"You may judge," went on the old gentleman, having taken breath, "what a relief it was to me to find all the difficulty settled for me. When I came to speak to Vaughan——"

"Ah! what did you say to him?"

"Well, I had never taught him to look upon himself as a rich man. He had always understood that his heritage was conditional. I had taken care that his education should prepare him for either position. He is studying for a barrister, and would not be thrown on the world without resources. Don't you understand?" And again he appealed to Miss Kendal. She nodded. "Still, I had made my will years ago, by which Redwood descended to him, and in a codicil added afterwards, I left to Caroline all the property in those—those infernal mines. It is not worth a hundred pounds now."

"And you said to your nephew——"

"I told him the whole state of the case. I was in a good deal of trouble. The thing knocked me over. I told him everything; I told him that Redwood must be settled on Caroline; that he must trust to his own talents, and the little money it would be in my power to leave him; I told him—all this, you know."

"And he replied——"

"By telling me that he and Caroline loved one another! I was astonished; for somehow, of late years, my old wishes and plans had faded away. It seemed natural, when first Caroline came here, to look forward, and fancy; but afterwards, I settled that I was a match-making old fool for my pains; these things never happen as we wish. You see I was wrong. It all came about even more favourably than I could have hoped."

"It was wonderfully opportune, indeed. You never suspected their attachment?"