

walking as far off as the little room would let her, flung herself into a chair.

"What's the matter?" asked Mina, checked in her excited gaiety.

"What will Harry care about anything they can give him without Blent?"

Mina flushed. The conspiracy was put before her—not by one of the conspirators, but by her who was the object of it. She remembered Lady Evenswood's question and Southend's. She had answered that it might not much matter whether Harry liked his cousin or not. He had not loved Janie Iver. Where was the difference?

"He won't want anything if he can't have Blent. Mina, did they say anything about me to Mr. Disney?"

"No," cried Mina eagerly.

"But they will, they mean to?" Cecily was leaning forward eagerly now.

Mina had no denial ready. She seemed rather to hang on Cecily's words than to feel any need of speaking herself. She was trying to follow Cecily's thoughts and to trace the cause of the apprehension, the terror almost, that had come on the girl's face.

"He'll see it—just as I see it!" Cecily went on. "And, Mina——"

She paused again. Still Mina had no words, and no comfort for her. This sight of the other side of the question was too sudden. It was Harry then, and Harry only, who had really been in her thoughts; and Cecily, her friend, was to be used as a tool. There might be little ground for blaming Southend who had never seen her, or Lady Evenswood who had been brought in purely in Harry's interest. But how stood Mina, who was Cecily's friend? Yet at last a thought flashed into her mind and gave her a weapon.

"Well, what did you come to London for?" she cried defiantly. "Why did you come, unless you meant that too?"

Cecily started a little and lay back in her chair.