

"A sensible grandfather. Come quickly, dear."

He paused again.

"But I fear I sent a note to say I could not dine."

"No, you did not. It has been lying on your table for two days."

"Dear me—dear me! I am getting very old."

They passed out of the church. Presently, as they hurried to the rectory near by, the girl said:

"But you haven't answered. Did you see the stranger? Do you know who he is?"

The rector turned, and pointed to the gate of Ridley Court. Gaston and Brillon were just entering.

"Alice," he said, in a vague, half-troubled way, "the man is a Belward, I think."

"Why, of course!" the girl replied with a flash of excitement. "But he's so dark, and foreign-looking! What Belward is he?"

"I do not know yet, my dear."

"I shall be up when you come back. But mind, don't leave just after dinner. Stay and talk; you must tell me everything that's said and done—and about the stranger."