

to Mina. "Lord Southend says he'd be glad to make my acquaintance and have a talk."

"Ask him down here, then."

"Ask him here? I'm not going to ask people to stay here."

"I think that's rather absurd." Mina had needed to summon up courage for this remark.

"And he says—there, look at this letter. He says he's seen Harry and hopes to be able to do something for him. What does he mean by that?" She came back towards Mina. "There must be something possible if he says that."

"He can't mean anything about—about Blent. He means——"

"I must find out what he means. I must see him. The letter came when I was just desperate. Father and I sitting down here together day after day! As if—as if——!" She paused and struggled for self-control. "There, I'm going to be quite calm and reasonable about it," she ended.

Mina had her doubts about that—and would have been sorry not to have them. The interest that had threatened to vanish from her life with Addie Tristram's death and Harry's departure was revived. She sat looking at the agitated girl in a pleasant suspense. Cecily took up Southend's letter again and smoothed it thoughtfully. "What should you think Harry must feel about me?" she asked, with a nearer approach to the calm which she had promised; but it seemed the quiet of despair.

Here Mina had her theory ready, and advanced it with confidence.

"I expect he hates you. You see he did what he did in a moment of excitement: he must have been wrought up by something—something quite unusual with him. You brought it about somehow."

"Yes, I know I did. Do you suppose I haven't thought about that?"

"There's sure to have been a reaction," pursued the sage