

"There is nothing for her to find out. Miss de Courset herself has no suspicion of my feelings, so naturally no one else has," said the infatuated young man, innocently.

"Well, well," said Dermot, as gravely as he could. "It's I who am responsible for her coming here; so it is I who will be blamed if the match isn't approved. I'm sure I don't care. Her Grace can say very little to me that she hasn't said before; if it comes to that. A disreputable, idle, extravagant, thoughtless spendthrift, careless of the best interests of the family, &c. &c."

"Dermot," said his brother, nervously, "I wish you would not speak as though it were a certainty. I haven't even asked her yet. And you forget that my personal disadvantages——"

"Bosh!" said Dermot.

"Let me tell you that if you think she'd marry me for any reason except——"

Dermot concealed a smile. "Poor Denis," he thought. "I suppose they're always like that. However, in this case perhaps his game leg makes him extra funky. What's the good of all this shilly-shallying? Still if by any chance she did take it into her head to refuse him, I believe he'd go clean off his chump."

This reflection caused him to ply his brother with excellent and disinterested counsel.

"Look here, Denis," he said gravely, "I advise you—and you know I've had lots of experience in these matters," interpolated the Lothario of twenty-four, "I advise you to go straight ahead and—and take her by storm, don't you know. There ain't any reason on earth why she *shouldn't* be fond of you—" he said awkwardly, "only—as she's an uncommonly pretty girl—I'll be hanged if she isn't"—he finished the whisky and soda—"whilst you're thinking about it, and mooning over your music and all that—some other fellow will cut in, and carry her off under your very nose, if you don't take care."

"I was always a bit of a muff, wasn't I, Dermot?" said the