

talk, and fresh colour in her face, was certainly not dying of any love-affair.

"Take the reins, grandmother, for a minute."

He had leapt down into the road, and was standing before her, almost ere she had time to recognize him. For a moment a quick gleam of gladness shone on her face; then, almost instinctively, she seemed to shrink from him, and she was reserved, distant, and formal.

He introduced her to the old lady, who said something nice to her about her sister. The young man was looking wistfully at her, troubled at heart that she treated him so coldly.

"I have got to break some news to you," he said; "perhaps you will consider it good news."

She looked up quickly.

"Nothing has happened to anybody—only some one has arrived. Mr. Roscorla is at the inn."

She did not flinch. He was vexed with her that she showed no sign of fear or dislike. On the contrary, she quickly said that she must then go down to the inn; and she bade them both good-bye, in a placid and ordinary way; while he drove off, with dark thoughts crowding into his imagination of what might happen down at the inn during the next few days. He was angry with her, he scarcely knew why.

Meanwhile Wenna, apparently quite calm, went on down the road; but there was no more laughing in her voice, no more light in her face.

"Miss Wenna," said the smaller of the two children, who could not understand this change, and who looked up with big, wondering eyes, "why does oo tremble so?"

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### SOME OLD FRIENDS.

WHEN they heard that Wenna was coming down the road they left Mr. Roscorla alone: lovers like to have their meetings and partings unobserved.

She went into the room, pale and yet firm—there was even a sense of gladness in her heart that now she must

know the worst. What would he say? How would he receive her? She knew that she was at his mercy.

Well, Mr. Roscorla at this moment was angry enough, for he had been deceived and trifled with in his absence, but he was also anxious, and his anxiety caused him to conceal his anger. He came forward to her with quite a pleasant look on his face; he kissed her and said—

"Why, now, Wenna, how frightened you seem! Did you think I was going to scold you? No, no, no—I hope there is no necessity for that. I am not unreasonable, or over-exacting, as a younger man might be; I can make allowances. Of course I can't say I liked what you told me, when I first heard of it; but then I reasoned with myself: I thought of your lonely position; of the natural liking a girl has for the attention of a young man; of the possibility of any one going thoughtlessly wrong. And really I see no great harm done. A passing fancy—that is all."

"Oh, I hope that is so!" she cried suddenly, with a pathetic earnestness of appeal. "It is so good of you, so generous of you to speak like that!"

For the first time she ventured to raise her eyes to his face. They were full of gratitude. Mr. Roscorla complimented himself on his knowledge of women; a younger man would have flown into a fury.

"Oh dear, yes, Wenna!" he said lightly, "I suppose all girls have their fancies stray a little bit from time to time; but is there any harm done? None whatever! There is nothing like marriage to fix the affections, as I hope you will discover ere long—the sooner the better, indeed. Now we will dismiss all those unpleasant matters we have been writing about."

"Then you do forgive me? You are not really angry with me?" she said; and then, finding a welcome assurance in his face, she gratefully took his hand and touched it with her lips.

This little act of graceful submission quite conquered Mr. Roscorla, and definitely removed all lingering traces of anger from his heart. He was no longer acting clemency when he said—with a slight blush on his forehead:

"You know, Wenna, I have not been free from blame either. That letter—it was merely a piece of thoughtless

anger ; but still it was very kind of you to consider it cancelled and withdrawn when I asked you. Well, I was in a bad temper at that time. You cannot look at things so philosophically when you are far away from home ; you feel yourself so helpless ; and you think you are being unfairly— However, not another word ! Come, let us talk of all your affairs, and all the work you have done since I left."

It was a natural invitation ; and yet it revealed in a moment the hollowness of the apparent reconciliation between them. What chance of mutual confidence could there be between these two ?

He asked Wenna if she had been busy in his absence ; and the thought immediately occurred to him that she had had at least sufficient leisure to go walking about with young Trelyon.

He asked her about the Sewing Club ; and she stumbled into the admission that Mr. Trelyon had presented that association with six sewing-machines.

Always Trelyon—always the recurrence of that uneasy consciousness of past events, which divided these two as completely as the Atlantic had done. It was a strange meeting, after that long absence.

"It is a curious thing," he said, rather desperately, "how marriage makes a husband and wife sure of each other. Anxiety is all over then. We have near us, out in Jamaica, several men whose wives and families are here in England ; and they accept their exile there as an ordinary commercial necessity. But then they put their whole minds into their work ; for they know that when they return to England they will find their wives and families just as they left them. Of course, in the majority of cases, the married men there have taken their wives out with them. Do you fear a long sea-voyage, Wenna ?"

"I don't know," she said, rather startled.

"You ought to be a good sailor, you know."

She said nothing to that : she was looking down, dreading what was coming.

"I am sure you must be a good sailor. I have heard of many of your boating adventures. Weren't you rather fond, some years ago, of going out at night with the Lundy pilots ?"

"I have never gone a long voyage in a large vessel," Wenna said, rather faintly.

"But if there was any reasonable object to be gained, an ordinary sea-voyage would not frighten you ?"

"Perhaps not."

"And they have really very good steamers going to the West Indies."

"Oh, indeed."

"First-rate ! You get a most comfortable cabin."

"I thought you rather—in your description of it—in your first letter—"

"Oh," said he, hurriedly and lightly (for he had been claiming sympathy on account of the discomfort of his voyage out), "perhaps I made a little too much of that. Besides, I did not make a proper choice in time. One gains experience in such matters. Now, if you were going out to Jamaica, I should see that you had every comfort."

"But you don't wish me to go out to Jamaica ?" she said, almost retreating from him.

"Well," said he, with a smile, for his only object at present was to familiarize her with the idea, "I don't particularly wish it, unless the project seemed a good one to you. You see, Wenna, I find that my stay there must be longer than I expected. When I went out at first the intention of my partners and myself was that I should merely be on the spot to help our manager by agreeing his accounts at the moment, and undertaking a lot of work of that sort, which otherwise would have consumed time in correspondence. I was merely to see the whole thing well started, and then return. But now I find that my superintendence may be needed there for a long while. Just when everything promises so well, I should not like to imperil all our chances simply for a year or two."

"Oh no, of course not," Wenna said : she had no objection to his remaining in Jamaica for a year or two longer than he had intended.

"That being so," he continued, "it occurred to me that perhaps you might consent to our marriage before I leave England again ; and that, indeed, you might even make up your mind to try a trip to Jamaica. Of course, we should have considerable spells of holiday, if you thought it was

worth while coming home for a short time. I assure you, you would find the place delightful—far more delightful than anything I told you in my letters, for I'm not very good at describing things. And there is a fair amount of society."

He did not prefer the request in an impassioned manner. On the contrary, he merely felt that he was satisfying himself by carrying out an intention he had formed on his voyage home. If, he had said to himself, Wenna and he became friends, he would at least suggest to her that she might put an end to all further suspense and anxiety by at once marrying him and accompanying him to Jamaica.

"What do you say?" he said, with a friendly smile. "Or have I frightened you too much? Well, let us drop the subject altogether for the present."

Wenna breathed again.

"Yes," said he, good-naturedly, "you can think over it. In the mean time do not harass yourself about that or anything else. You know, I have come home to spend a holiday."

"And won't you come and see the others?" said Wenna, rising, with a glad look of relief on her face.

"Oh yes, if you like," he said; and then he stopped short, and an angry gleam shot into his eyes.

"Wenna, who gave you that ring?"

"Oh, Mabyn did," was the frank reply; but all the same Wenna blushed hotly, for that matter of the emerald ring had not been touched upon.

"Mabyn did?" he repeated, somewhat suspiciously. "She must have been in a generous mood."

"When you know Mabyn as well as I do, you will find out that she always is," said Miss Wenna, quite cheerfully; she was indeed in the best of spirits to find that this dreaded interview had not been so very frightful after all, and that she had done no mortal injury to one who had placed his happiness in her hands.

When Mr. Roscorla, some time after, set out to walk by himself up to Basset Cottage, whither his luggage had been sent before him, he felt a little tired. He was not accustomed to violent emotions; and that morning he had gone

through a good deal. His anger and anxiety had for long been fighting for mastery; and both had reached their climax that morning. On the one hand, he wished to avenge himself for the insult paid him, and to show that he was not to be trifled with; on the other hand, his anxiety lest he should be unable to make up matters with Wenna, led him to put an unusual value upon her. What was the result, now that he had definitely won her back to himself? What was the sentiment that followed on these jarring emotions of the morning?

To tell the truth, a little disappointment. Wenna was not looking her best when she entered the room; even now he remembered that the pale face rather shocked him. She was more—insignificant, perhaps, is the best word—than he had expected. Now that he had got back the prize which he thought he had lost, it did not seem to him, after all, to be so wonderful.

And in this mood he went up and walked into the pretty little cottage which had once been his home. "What?" he said to himself, looking in amazement at the old-fashioned parlour, and at the still smaller study, filled with books, "is it possible that I ever proposed to myself to live and die in a hole like this?—my only companion a cantankerous old fool of a woman, my only occupation reading the newspapers, my only society the good folks of the inn?"

He thanked God he had escaped. His knocking about the world for a bit had opened up his mind. The possibility of his having in time a handsome income had let in upon him many new and daring ambitions.

His housekeeper, having expressed her grief that she had just posted some letters to him, not knowing that he was returning to England, brought in a number of small pass-books and a large sheet of blue paper.

"If yū bain't too tired, zor, vor to look over the accounts, 'tis all theear but the pultry that Mr.——"

"Good heavens, Mrs. Cornish!" said he, "do you think I am going to look over a lot of grocers' bills?"

Mrs. Cornish not only hinted in very plain language that her master had been at one time particular enough about grocers' bills, and all other bills, however trifling, but further proceeded to give him a full and minute account of

the various incidental expenses to which she had been put through young Penny Luke having broken a window by flinging a stone from the road; through the cat having knocked down the best teapot; through the pig having got out of its sty, gone mad, and smashed a cucumber-frame; and so forth, and so forth. In desperation, Mr. Roscorla got up, put on his hat, and went outside, leaving her at once astonished and indignant over his want of interest in what at one time had been his only care.

Was this, then, the place in which he had chosen to spend the rest of his life, without change, without movement, without interest? It seemed to him at the moment a living tomb. There was not a human being within sight. Far away out there lay the grey-blue sea—a plain without a speck on it. The great black crags at the mouth of the harbour were voiceless and sterile; could anything have been more bleak than the bare uplands on which the pale sun of an English October was shining? The quiet crushed him; there was not a nigger near to swear at; nor could he, at the impulse of a moment, get on horseback and ride over to the busy and interesting and picturesque scene supplied by his faithful coolies at work.

What was he to do on this very first day in England, for example? Unpack his luggage, in which were some curiosities he had brought home for Wenna?—there was too much trouble in that. Walk about the garden and smoke a pipe as had been his wont?—he had got emancipated from these delights of dotage. Attack his grocers' bills?—he swore by all his gods that he would have nothing to do with the price of candles and cheese now or at any future time. The return of the exile to his native land had already produced a feeling of deep disappointment; when he married, he said to himself, he would take very good care not to sink into an oyster-like life in Eglosilyan.

About a couple of hours after, however, he was reminded that Eglosilyan had its small measure of society, by the receipt of a letter from Mrs. Trelyon, who said she had just heard of his arrival, and hastened to ask him whether he would dine at the Hall not next evening but the following one, to meet two old friends of his, General and Lady Weekes, who were there on a brief visit.

"And I have written to ask Miss Rosewarne," Mrs. Trelyon continued, "to spare us the same evening, so that we hope to have you both. Perhaps you will kindly add your entreaties to mine."

The friendly intention of this postscript was evident; and yet it did not seem to please Mr. Roscorla. This Sir Percy Weekes had been a friend of his father's; and when the younger Roscorla was a young man about town, Lady Weekes had been very kind to him, and had nearly got him married once or twice. There was a great contrast between those days and these. He hoped the old General would not be tempted to come and visit him at Basset Cottage.

"Oh, Wenna," said he carelessly, to her next morning, "Mrs. Trelyon told me she had asked you to go up there to-morrow evening."

"Yes," Wenna said, looking rather uncomfortable. Then she added, quickly, "Would it displease you if I did not go? I ought to be at a children's party at Mr. Trewhella's."

This was precisely what Mr. Roscorla wanted; but he said—

"You must not be shy, Wenna. However, please yourself; you need have no fear of vexing me. But I must go; for the Weekeses are old friends of mine."

"They stayed at the inn two or three days in May last," said Wenna, innocently. "They came here by chance and found Mrs. Trelyon from home."

Mr. Roscorla seemed startled.

"Oh," said he. "Did they—did they—ask for me?"

"Yes, I believe they did," Wenna said.

"Then you told them," said Mr. Roscorla, with a pleasant smile, "you told them, of course, why you were the best person in the world to give them information about me."

"Oh, dear, no," said Wenna, blushing hotly, "they spoke to Jennifer."

Mr. Roscorla felt himself rebuked. It was George Rosewarne's express wish that his daughters should not be approached by strangers visiting the inn as if they were officially connected with the place: Mr. Roscorla should have remembered that inquiries would be made of a servant.

But, as it happened, Sir Percy and his wife had really made the acquaintance of both Wenna and Mabyn on their chance visit to Eglosilyan; and it was of these two girls they were speaking when Mr. Roscorla was announced in Mrs. Trelyon's drawing-room the following evening. The thin, wiry, white-moustached old man, who had wonderfully bright eyes and a great vivacity of spirits for a veteran of seventy-four, was standing in front of the fire, and declaring to everybody that two such well-accomplished, smart, talkative, and ladylike young women he had never met with in his life.

"What did you say the name was, my dear Mrs. Trelyon? Rosewarne, eh?—Rosewarne? A good old Cornish name—as good as yours, Roscorla. So they're called Rosewarne—Gad, if her august ladyship there wants to appoint a successor, I'm willing to let her choice fall on one o' these two girls."

Her august ladyship—a dark and silent old woman of eighty—did not like, in the first place, to be called her august ladyship, and did not relish either having her death talked of as a joke.

"Roscorla, now—Roscorla—there's a good chance for you, eh?" continued the old General. "We never could get you married, you know—wild young dog. Don't ye know the girls?"

"Oh yes, Sir Percy," Mr. Roscorla said, with no great good will; then he turned to the fire and began to warm his hands.

There was a tall young gentleman standing there who, in former days, would have been delighted to cry out on such an occasion, "Why, Roscorla's going to marry one of 'em." He remained silent now.

He was very silent, too, throughout the evening; and almost anxiously civil towards Mr. Roscorla. He paid great attention when the latter was describing to the company at table the beauties of West Indian scenery, the delights of West Indian life, the change that had come over the prospects of Jamaica since the introduction of coolie labour, and the fashion in which the rich merchants of Cuba were setting about getting plantations there for the growth of tobacco. Mr. Roscorla spoke with the air of

a man who now knew what the world was. When the old General asked him if he were coming back to live in Eglosilyan after he had become a millionaire, he laughed, and said that one's coffin came soon enough without one's rushing to meet it. No; when he came back to England finally, he would live in London; and had Sir Percy still that old walled-in house in Brompton?

Sir Percy paid less heed to these descriptions of Jamaica than Harry Trelyon did, for his next neighbour was old Mrs. Trelyon, and these two venerable flirts were talking of old acquaintances and old times at Bath and Cheltenham, and of the celebrated beauties, wits, and murderers of other days, in a manner which her silent ladyship did not at all seem to approve. The General was bringing out all his old-fashioned gallantry—compliments, easy phrases in French, polite attentions; his companion began to use her fan with a coquettish grace, and was vastly pleased when a reference was made to her celebrated flight to Gretna Green.

"Ah, Sir Percy," she said, "the men were men in those days, and the women women, I promise you; no beating about the bush, but the fair word given, and the fair word taken; and then a broken head for whoever should interfere, father, uncle, or brother, no matter who; and you know our family, Sir Percy, our family were among the worst—"

"I tell you what, madam," said the General, hotly, "your family had among 'em the handsomest women in the west of England—and the handsomest men, too, by Gad! Do you remember Jane Swanhope—the Fair Maid of Somerset they used to call her—that married the fellow living down Yeovil way, who broke his neck in a steeple-chase?"

"Do I remember her," said the old lady. "She was one of my bridesmaids when they took me up to London to get married properly after I came back! She was my cousin on the mother's side; but they were connected with the Trelyons, too. And do you remember old John Trelyon of Polkerris; and did you ever see a man straighter in the back than he was, at seventy-one, when he married his second wife—that was at Exeter, I think. But there now, you don't find such men and women in these times; and do

you know the reason of that, Sir Percy? I'll tell you; it's the doctors. The doctors can keep all the sickly ones alive now; before it was only the strong ones that lived. Dear, dear me, when I hear some of those London women talk—it is nothing but a catalogue of illnesses and diseases. No wonder they should say in church, 'There is no health in us;' every one of them has something the matter, even the young girls, poor things; and pretty mothers they're likely to make! They're a misery to themselves; they'll bring miserable things into the world; and all because the doctors have become so clever in pulling sickly people through. That's my opinion, Sir Percy. The doctors are responsible for five-sixths of all the suffering you hear of in families, either through illness or the losing of one's friends and relatives."

"Upon my word, madam," the General protested, "you use the doctor badly. He is blamed if he kills people, and he is blamed if he keeps them alive. What is he to do?"

"Do? He can't help saving the sickly ones now," the old lady admitted; "for relatives will have it done, and they know he can do it; but it's a great misfortune, Sir Percy, that's what it is, to have all these sickly creatures growing up to inter-marry into the good old families that used to be famous for their comeliness and strength. There was a man, yes, I remember him well, that came from Devonshire—he was a man of good family, too, and they made such a noise about his wrestling. Said I to myself, wrestling is not a fit amusement for gentlemen, but if this man comes up to our country, there's one or other of the Trelyons will try his mettle. And well I remember saying to my eldest son George—you remember when he was a young man, Sir Percy, no older than his own son there—'George,' I said, 'if this Mr. So-and-so comes into these parts, mind you have nothing to do with him; for wrestling is not fit for gentlemen.' 'All right, mother,' said he; but he laughed, and I knew what the laugh meant. My dear Sir Percy, I tell you the man hadn't a chance—I heard of it all afterwards. George caught him up, before he could begin any of his tricks, and flung him on to the hedge—and there were a dozen more in our family who could have done it, I'll be bound."

"But then, you know, Mrs. Trelyon," Mr. Roscorla ventured to say, "physical strength is not everything that is needed. If the doctors were to let the sickly ones die, we might be losing all sorts of great poets, and statesmen, and philosophers."

The old lady turned on him.

"And do you think a man has to be sickly to be clever? No, no, Mr. Roscorla, give him better health and you give him a better head, that's what we believed in the old days. I fancy, now, there were greater men before all this coddling began than there are now, yes, I do; and if there is a great man coming into the world, the chances are just as much that he'll be among the strong ones as among the sickly ones—what do you think, Sir Percy?"

"I declare you're right, madam," said he, gallantly. "You've quite convinced me. Of course, some of 'em must go—I say, let the sickly ones go."

"I never heard such brutal, such murderous sentiments expressed in my life before," said a solemn voice; and every one became aware that at last Lady Weekes had spoken. Her speech was the signal for universal silence, in the midst of which the ladies got up and left the room.

Trelyon took his mother's place, and sent round the wine. He was particularly attentive to Mr. Roscorla, who was surprised. "Perhaps," thought the latter, "he is anxious to atone for all this bother that is now happily over."

If the younger man was silent and pre-occupied, that was not the case with Mr. Roscorla, who was already assuming the airs of a rich person and speaking of his being unable to live in this district or that district of London, just as if he expected to purchase a lease of Buckingham Palace on his return from Jamaica.

"And how are all my old friends in Hans Place, Sir Percy?" he cried.

"You've been a deserter, sir, you've been a deserter for many a year now," the General said gaily, "but we're all willing to have you back again, to a quiet rubber after dinner, you know. Do you remember old John Thwaites? Ah, he's gone now—left 150,000*l.* to build a hospital, and only 5,000*l.* to his sister. The poor old woman believed

some one would marry her when she got the whole of her brother's money—so I'm told—and when the truth became known, what did she do? Gad, sir, she wrote a novel abusing her own brother. By the way, that reminds me of a devilish good thing I heard when I was here last—down at the inn, you know—what's the name of the girls I was talking about? Well, her ladyship caught one of them reading a novel, and not very well pleased with it, and says she to the young lady, 'Don't you like that book?' Then says the girl—let me see what was it?—Gad, I must go and ask her ladyship—"

And off he trotted to the drawing-room. He came back in a couple of minutes.

"Of course," said he. "Devilish stupid of me to forget it. 'Why?' said the young lady, 'I think the author has been trying to keep the second commandment, for there's nothing in the book that has any likeness to anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or the heavens under the earth—'"

"The waters under the earth."

"I mean the waters, of course. Gad, her ladyship was immensely tickled."

"Which of the two young ladies was it, Sir Percy? The younger, I suppose?" said Mr. Roscorla.

"No, no, the elder sister, of course," said Trelyon.

"Yes, the elder one it was—the quiet one—and an uncommon nice girl she is." Well, there's Captain Walters—the old sea dog—still to the fore; and his uniform too—don't you remember the uniform with the red cuffs that hasn't been seen in the navy for a couple of centuries, I should think! His son's got into Parliament now—gone over to the Rads, and the working-men, and those fellows that are scheming to get the land divided among themselves—all in the name of philosophy—and it's a devilish fine sort of philosophy, that is, when you haven't a rap in your pocket, and when you prove that everybody who has must give it up. He came to my house the other day, and he was jawing away about Primogeniture, and Entail, and Direct Taxation, and equal electoral districts, and I don't know what besides. 'Walters,' said I, 'Walters, you've got nothing to share, and so you don't mind a general division.

When you have, you'll want to stick to what's in your own pocket.' Had him there, eh?"

The old General beamed and laughed over his smartness; he was conscious of having said something that, in shape at least, was like an epigram.

"I must rub up my acquaintance in that quarter," said Roscorla, "before I leave again. Fortunately, I have always kept up my club subscription; and you'll come and dine with me, Sir Percy, won't you, when I get to town?"

"Are you going to town?" said Trelyon quickly.

"Oh, yes, of course."

"When?"

The question was abrupt, and it made Roscorla look at the young man as he answered. Trelyon seemed to him to be very much harassed about something or other.

"Well, I suppose in a week or so; I am only home for a holiday, you know."

"Oh, you'll be here for a week?" said the young man, submissively. "When do you think of returning to Jamaica?"

"Probably at the beginning of next month. Fancy leaving England in November—just at the most hideous time of the year—and in a week or two getting out into summer again, with the most beautiful climate, and foliage, and what not, all around you! I can tell you a man makes a great mistake who settles down to a sort of vegetable life anywhere—you don't catch me at that again."

"There's some old women," observed the General, who was so anxious to show his profundity, that he quite forgot the invidious character of the comparison, "who are just like trees—as much below the ground as above it—isn't that true, eh? They're a deal more at home among the people they have buried than among those that are alive. I don't say that's your case, Roscorla. You're comparatively a young man yet—you've got brisk health—I don't wonder at your liking to knock about. As for you, young Trelyon, what do you mean to do?"

Harry Trelyon started.

"Oh," said he, with some confusion, "I have no immediate plans. Yes, I have—don't you know I have been

cramming for the Civil Service examinations for first commissions?"

"And what the devil made the War Office go to those civilians?" muttered the General.

"And if I pull through, I shall want all your influence to get me gazetted to a good regiment. Don't they often shunt you on to the First or Second West Indians?"

"And you've enough money to back you too," said the General. "I tell you what it is, gentlemen, if they abolish the purchase of commissions in the army—and they're always talking about it—they don't know what they'll bring about. They'll have two sets of officers in the army—men with money, who like a good mess, and live far beyond their pay, and men with no money at all, who've got to live on their pay, and how can they afford the regimental mess out of that? But Parliament won't stand it you'll see. The War Minister 'll be beaten if he brings it on—take my word for that."

The old General had probably never heard of a royal warrant and its mighty powers.

"So you're going to be one of us?" he said to Trelyon. "Well, you've a smart figure for a uniform. You're the first of your side of the family to go into the army, eh? You had some naval men among you, eh?"

"I think you'd better ask my grandmother," said young Trelyon, with a laugh; "she'll tell you stories about 'em by the hour together."

"She's a wonderful woman that—a wonderful old creature," said the General, just as if he were a sprightly young fellow talking of the oldest inhabitant of the district. "She's not one of them that are half buried; she's wide enough awake, I'll be bound. Gad, what a handsome woman she was when I saw her first. Well, lads, let's join the ladies; I'm none of your steady-going old toppers. Enough's as good's a feast—that's my motto. And I can't write my name on a slate with my knuckles, either."

And so they went into the large, dimly-lit, red chamber, where the women were having tea round the blazing fire. The men took various chairs about; the conversation became general; old Lady Weekes feebly endeavoured to keep

up her eyelids. In about half-an-hour or so Mrs. Trelyon happened to glance round the room.

"Where's Harry?" said she.

No one apparently had noticed that Master Harry had disappeared.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### A DARK CONSPIRACY.

Now, when Harry Trelyon drove up to the Hall, after leaving Wenna Rosewarne in the road, he could not tell why he was vexed with her. He imagined somehow that she should not have allowed Mr. Roscorla to come home—and to come home just at this moment, when he, Trelyon, had stolen down for a couple of days to have a shy look at the sweetheart who was so far out of his reach. She ought to have been alone. Then she ought not to have looked so calm and complacent on going away to meet Mr. Roscorla; she ought to have been afraid. She ought to have—in short everything was wrong, and Wenna was largely to blame.

"Well, grandmother," said he, as they drove through the avenue, "don't you expect every minute to flush a covey of parsons?"

He was angry with Wenna; and so he broke out once more in his old vein.

"There are worse men than the parsons, Harry," the old lady said.

"I'll bet you a sovereign there are two on the doorstep."

He would have lost. There was not a clergyman of any sort in or about the house.

"Isn't Mr. Barnes here?" said he to his mother.

Mrs. Trelyon flushed slightly, as she said—

"No, Harry, Mr. Barnes is not here. Nor is he likely to visit here again."

Now Mr. Roscorla would at once have perceived what a strange little story lay behind that simple speech; but Mr. Harry, paying no attention to it, merely said he was heartily glad to hear of it, and showed his gratitude by being unusually polite to his mother during the rest of his stay.