Trevlyn Hold desires," etc., etc., all in vain. People readily accorded his wife the title of Madam—as it was the custom to call the mistress of Trevlyn Hold—she was the old Squire's daughter, and they recognized her claim to it, but they did not give that of Squire to her husband.

These things had happened years ago, for Maude and Rupert are now aged respectively thirteen and twelve, and all that time had James Chattaway enjoyed his sway. Never, never; no, not even in the still night when the voice of conscience in most men is so suggestive; never giving a thought to the wrong dealt out to Rupert.

And it must be mentioned that the first thing Mr. Chattaway did, after the death of Squire Trevlyn, was to sue Mr. Ryle upon the bond; which he had *not* destroyed, although ordered to do so by the Squire. The next thing he did was to raise the farm to a ruinous rent. Mr. Ryle, naturally indignant, remonstrated, and there had been ill-feeling between them from that hour to this; but Chattaway had the law on his own side. Some of the bond was paid off; but altogether, what with the increased rent, the bond and its interest, and a succession of ill-luck on the farm, Mr. Ryle had scarcely been able to keep his head above water. As he said to his wife and children, when the bull had done its work—he was taken from a world of care.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. RYLE'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

ETIQUETTE, touching the important ceremonies of buryings and christenings, is much more observed in the country than in towns. To rural districts this remark especially applies. In a large town people don't know their next-door neighbours, don't care for their neighbours' opinions. In a smaller place the inhabitants are almost as one family, and their actions are chiefly governed by that pertinent remark, "What will people say?" In these narrow communities, numbers of which are scattered about England, it is considered necessary on the occasion of a funeral to invite all kith and kin. Omit to do so, and it would be set down as a premeditated slight; affording the parish a theme of gossip for weeks afterwards. Hence

Mr. Chattaway, being a connection—brother-in-law, in fact, of the deceased gentleman's wife—was invited to follow the remains of Thomas Ryle to the grave. In spite of the bad terms they had been on; in spite of Mrs. Ryle's own bitter feelings against Chattaway and Trevlyn Hold generally; in spite of Mr. Ryle's death having been caused by Chattaway's bull—Mr. Chattaway received a formal invitation to attend as mourner the remains to the grave. And it never would have entered into Mr. Chattaway's idea of good manners to decline it.

An inquest had been held at the nearest inn. The verdict returned was "Accidental Death," with a deodand of five pounds upon the bull. Which Mr. Chattaway had to pay.

The bull was already condemned. Not to annihilation; but to be taken to a distant fair, and there sold; whence he would be conveyed to other pastures, where he might possibly gore somebody else. It was not consideration for the feelings of the Ryle family which induced Mr. Chattaway to adopt this step, and so rid the neighbourhood of the animal; but consideration for his own pocket. Feeling ran high in the vicinity; fear also; the stoutest hearts could feel no security that the bull might not have a tilt at them: and Chattaway, on his part, was as little certain that an effectual silencer would not be dealt out to the bull some quiet night. Therefore, he resolved to part with him. Apart from his misdoings, he was a valuable animal, worth a great deal more than Mr. Chattaway would like to lose; and the bull was dismissed.

The day of the funeral arrived, and those bidden to it began to assemble about one o'clock: that is, the undertaker's men, the clerk, and the carriers. Of the latter, Jim Sanders made one. "Better that he had gone than his master," said Nora, in a matter-of-fact, worldly spirit of reasoning, as her thoughts were cast back to the mysterious hole with which she had gratuitously, and the reader will no doubt say absurdly, coupled Jim's fate. A table of eatables was laid out in the entrance-room: cold round of beef, and bread-and-cheese, with large supplies of ale. To help to convey a coffin to church without being first regaled with a good meal, was a thing that Barbrook had never heard of, and never wished to hear of. The select members of the company were shown to the large drawing-room, where the refreshment consisted of port and sherry, and a plate of "pound" cake. These were the established rules of hospitality at all genteel, well-to-do funerals: wine and

pound cake for the gentlefolks; cold beef and ale for the men. They had been observed at Squire Trevlyn's; at Mr. Ryle's father's; at every substantial funeral within the memory of Barbrook. Mr. Chattaway, Mr. Berkeley (a distant relative of Mr. Ryle's first wife), Mr. King the surgeon, and Farmer Apperley comprised the assemblage in the drawing-room.

At two o'clock, after some little difficulty in getting it into order, the sad procession started. It had then been joined by George and Trevlyn Ryle. A great many spectators had collected to view and attend it. The infrequency of a funeral in the respectable class, combined with the circumstances attending the death, drew them together: and before the church was reached, where it was met by the clergyman, it had a train half-a-mile long after it; chiefly women and children. Many dropped a tear for the premature death of one who had lived amongst them as a good master, a kind neighbour.

They left him in his grave, by the side of his long-ago-dead wife, Mary Berkeley. As George stood at the head of his father's coffin, during the ceremony in the churchyard, the gravestone with its name was right in front of him; his mother's name: "Mary, the wife of Thomas Ryle, and only daughter of the Rev. George Berkeley." None knew with what a feeling of loneliness the orphan boy turned from the spot, as the last words of the minister died away.

Mrs. Ryle, in her widow's weeds, was seated in the drawing-room on their return, as the gentleman filed into it. In Barbrook custom, the relatives of the deceased, near or distant, were expected to assemble together for the remainder of the day; or for a portion of it. The gentlemen would sometimes smoke, and the ladies in their deep mourning sat with their hands folded in their laps, resting on their snow-white handkerchiefs. The conversation was only allowed to run on family matters, future prospects, and the like; and the voices were amicable and subdued.

As the mourners entered, they shook hands severally with Mrs. Ryle. Chattaway put out his hand last, and with perceptible hesitation. It was many a year since his hand had been given in fellowship to Mrs. Ryle, or had taken hers. They had been friendly once, and in the old days he had called her "Maude:" but that was over now.

Mrs. Ryle turned from the offered hand. "No," she said, speaking in quiet but most decisive tones. "I cannot forget

the past sufficiently for that, James Chattaway. On this day it is forcibly present to me."

They sat down. Trevlyn next his mother, called there by her. The gentlemen disposed themselves on the side of the table facing the fire, and George found a chair a little behind them; no one seemed to notice him. And so much the better; the boy's heart was too full to bear much notice then.

On the table was placed the paper which had been written by the surgeon, at the dictation of Mr. Ryle, the night when he lay in extremity. It had not been unfolded since. Mr. King took it up; he knew that he was expected to read it. They were waiting for him to do so.

"I must premise that the writing of this is Mr. Ryle's," he said. "He expressly requested me to pen down his *own words*, just as they came from his lips. He——"

"Is it a will?" interrupted Farmer Apperley, a little gentleman, with a red face and a large nose. He had come to the funeral in top boots, which constituted his idea of full dress.

"You can call it a will, if you please," replied Mr. King. "I am not sure that the law would do so. It was in consequence of his not having made a will that he requested me to write down these few directions."

The farmer nodded; and Mr. King began to read.

"In the name of God: Amen. I, Thomas Ryle.

"First of all, I bequeath my soul to God. Trusting that He will pardon my sins, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

"It's a dreadful blow, the killing of me by that bull of Chattaway's. The more so, that I am unable to leave things straightforward for my wife and children. They know—at least, my wife knows, and all the parish knows—the pressure that has been upon me, through Chattaway coming down upon me as he has done. I have been as a bird with its wings clipped. As soon as I tried to get up, I was pulled down again.

"Ill luck has been upon me besides. Beasts have died off, and crops have failed. The farm's not good for much, for all the money that has been laid out upon it, and no one but me knows the labour it has cost. When you think of these things, my dear wife and boys, you'll know why I do not leave you better provided for. Many and many a night have I laid awake upon my bed, fretting, and planning, and hoping, all for your sakes. Perhaps if that bull had spared me to old age, I might have left you better off,

"I should like to bequeath the furniture and all that is in the house, and the stock, and the beasts, and all that I die possessed of, to my dear wife, Maude—but it's not of any use, for Chattaway will sell up—except the silver tankard, and that should go to Trevlyn. But for having 'T. R.' upon it, it should go to George, for he is the eldest. T. R. stood for my father, and T. R. has stood for me, and T. R. will stand for Trevlyn. George, though he is the eldest, won't grudge it him, if I know anything of his nature. And I give to George my watch, and I hope he'll keep it for his dead father's sake. It is only a silver one, as I dare say you have noticed, doctor; but it's a very good one, and George can have his initials engraved on the shield at the back. And the three seals, and the gold key, I give to him with it. The red cornelian has our arms on it. For we had arms once, and my father and I have generally sealed our letters with them: not that they have done him or me any good. And let Treve keep the tankard faithfully, and never part with it. And remember, my dear boys, that your poor father would have left you better keepsakes had it been in his power. You must prize these for the dead giver's sake. But there! it's of no use talking, for Chattaway, he'll sell up, watch and tankard, and all.

"And I should like to leave that bay foal to my dear little Caroline. It will be a rare pretty creature when it's bigger. And you must let it have the run of the three-cornered paddock, and I should like to see her on it, sweet little soul!—but Chattaway's bull has stopped it. And don't grudge the cost of a little saddle for her; and Roger can break it in; and mind you are all true and tender with my dear little girl. If I thought you wouldn't be, I would rather have her with me in my coffin. But you are good lads—though Treve is hasty when his temper's put out—and I know you'll be to her what brothers ought to be. I always meant that foal for Carry, since I saw how pretty it was likely to grow, though I didn't say what was in my mind; and now I give it to her. But where's the use? Chattaway will sell up.

"If he does sell up, to the last stick and stone, he won't get his debt in full. Perhaps not much above the half of it; for things at a forced sale don't bring their value. You have put down 'his debt,' Mr. King, I suppose; but it is not his debt. I am on my death-bed, and I say that the two thousand pounds was made a present of to me by the Squire on *his* death-bed. He told me it was made all right with Chattaway; that Chattaway understood the promise given to me, not to raise the rent; and that he'd be the same just landlord to me that the Squire had been. The Squire could not lay his hand on the bond, or he would have given it me then; but he said Chattaway should burn it as soon as he entered, which would be in an hour or two. Chattaway knows whether he has acted up to this; and now his bull has done for me.

"And I wish to tell Chattaway that if he'll act a fair part as a man ought, and let my wife and the boys stop on the farm, he'll stand a much better chance of getting the money, than he would if he turns them out of it. I don't say this for their sakes more than for his; but because from my heart I believe it to be the truth. George has his head on his shoulders the right way, and I would advise his mother to keep him on the farm; he will be getting older every day. Not but that I wish her to use her own judgment in all things, for her judgment is good. In time, they may be able to pay off Chattaway; in time they may be able even to buy back the farm, for I cannot forget that it belonged to my forefathers, and not to the Squire. That is, if Chattaway will be reasonable, and let them stop on it, and not be hard and pressing. But perhaps I am talking nonsense, doctor, for he may turn them off and do for them, as his bull has done for me.

"And now, my dear George and Treve, I repeat it to you, be good boys to your mother. Obey her in all things. Maude, I have left all to you in preference to dividing it between you and them, for which there is no time; but I know you'll do the right thing by them: and when it comes to your turn to leave—if Chattaway don't sell up—I wish you to bequeath to them in equal shares what you die possessed of. George is not your son, but he is mine, and—— But perhaps I'd better not say what I was going to say, doctor. And, my boys, work while it's day. In that Book which I have not read so much as I ought to have read, it says 'The night cometh when no man can work.' When we hear that read in church, or when we get the Book out on a Sunday evening and read it to ourselves, that night seems a long, long way off. It seems so far off that it can hardly ever be any concern of ours; and it is only when we are cut off suddenly that we find how very near it is. That night has come for me; and that night will come for you before you are aware of it. So, *work*—and score that, doctor. God has placed us in this world to work, and not to be ashamed of it; and to work for Him as well as for ourselves. It was often

in my mind that I ought to work more for God—that I ought to think more of Him; and I used to say, 'I will do so when a bit of this bother's off my mind.' But the bother was always there, and I never did it. And now the end's come; and I can see things would have been made easier to me if I *had* done it—score it again, doctor—and I say it as a lesson to you, my children.

"And I think that's about all; and I am much obliged to you, doctor, for writing this. I hope they'll be able to manage things on the farm, and I would ask my neighbour Apperley to give them his advice now and then, for old friendship's sake, until George shall be older, and to put him in a way of buying and selling stock. If Chattaway don't sell up, that is. If he does, I hardly know how it will be. Perhaps God will put them in some other way, and take care of them. And I would leave my best thanks to Nora, for she has been a true friend to us all, and I don't know how the house would have got on without her. And now I am growing faint, doctor, and I think the end is coming. God bless you all, my dear ones. Amen."

A deep silence fell on the room as Mr. King ceased. He folded the paper, and laid it on the table near Mrs. Ryle. The first to speak was Farmer Apperley.

"Any help that I can be of to you and George, Mrs. Ryle, and to all of you, is heartily at your service. It will be yours with right goodwill at all times and seasons. The more so, that you know if I had been cut off in this way, my poor friend Ryle would have been the first to offer to do as much for my wife and boys, and have thought no trouble of it. George, you can come over and ask me about things, just as you would ask your father; or send for me up here to the farm; and whatever work I may be at at home, though it was the putting out of a barn on fire, I'd come."

"And now it is my turn to speak," said Mr. Chattaway. "And, Mrs. Ryle, I give you my promise, in the presence of these gentlemen, that if you choose to remain on the farm, I will put no hindrance upon it. Your husband thought me hard—unjust; he said it before my face and behind my back. My opinion always has been that he entirely mistook Squire Trevlyn in that last interview he had with him. I do not think it was ever the Squire's intention to cancel the bond: Ryle must have misunderstood him altogether: at any rate, I heard nothing of it. As successor to the estate, the bond came into my possession; and in my wife and children's interest I could

not consent to destroy it. No one but a soft-hearted man—and that's what Ryle was, poor fellow—would have thought of asking such a thing. But I was willing to give him every facility for paying it, and I did do so. No! It was not my hardness that was in fault, but his pride and nonsense, and his thinking I ought not to ask for my own money——"

"If you bring up these things, James Chattaway, I must answer them," interrupted Mrs. Ryle. "I would prefer not to be forced to do it to-day."

"I do not want to bring them up in any unpleasant spirit," answered Mr. Chattaway; "or to say it was his fault or my fault. We'll let bygones be bygones. He is gone, poor man; and I wish that savage beast of a bull had been in four quarters, before he had done the mischief! All I would now say, is, that I'll put no impediment to your remaining on the farm. We will not go into business details this afternoon, but I will come in any day that you like to appoint, and talk it over. If you choose to keep on the farm at its present rent—it is well worth it—to pay me interest for the money owing, and a yearly sum towards diminishing the debt, you are welcome to do it."

Just what Nora had predicted! Mr. Chattaway loved money too greatly to run the risk of losing part of the debt—as he probably would do if he turned them from the farm. Mrs. Ryle bowed her head in cold acquiescence. She saw no way open to her except that of accepting the offer. Very probably Mr. Chattaway knew that there was no other.

"The sooner things are settled, the better," she remarked. "I will name eleven o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Very good; I'll be here," he answered. "And I am glad it is decided amicably."

The rest of those present appeared also to be glad. Perhaps they had feared some unpleasant recrimination might take place between Mrs. Ryle and James Chattaway. Thus relieved, they unbent a little, and crossed their legs as if inclined to become more sociable.

"What shall you do with the boys, Mrs. Ryle?" suddenly asked Farmer Apperley.

"Treve, of course, will go to school as usual," she replied. "George—— I have not decided about George."

"Shall I have to leave school?" cried George, looking up with a start.

"Of course you will," said Mrs. Ryle.

"But what will become of my Latin; of my studies alto-

gether?" returned George, in tones of dismay. "You know, mamma——"

"It cannot be helped, George," she interrupted, speaking in the uncompromising and decisive manner, so characteristic of her; as it was of her sister, Miss Diana Trevlyn. "You must turn your attention to something more profitable than schooling, now."

"If a boy of fifteen has not had schooling enough, I'd like to know when he has had it?" interposed Farmer Apperley, who neither understood nor approved of the strides which education and intellect had made since the time when he was a boy. Very substantial people in his day had been content to learn to read and write and cipher, and to deem that amount of learning sufficient to grow rich upon. As did the Dutch professor, to whom George Primrose wished to teach Greek, but who declined the offer. He had never learned Greek; he had lived, and ate, and slept without Greek; and therefore he did not see any good in Greek. Thus was it with Farmer Apperley.

"What do you learn at school, George?" questioned Mr. Berkeley.

"Latin and Greek, and mathematics, and——"

"But, George, where will be the good of such things to you?" cried Farmer Apperley, not allowing him to end the catalogue. "Latin and Greek and mathematics! that *is* fine, that is!"

"I don't see much good in giving a boy that sort of education myself," put in Mr. Chattaway, before any one else had time to speak. "Unless he is to be reared to a profession, the classics only lie fallow in the memory. I hated them, I know that; I and my brother, too. Many and many a caning we have had over our Latin, until we wished the books at the bottom of the sea. Twelve months after we left school we could not have construed a page, had it been put before us. That's all the good learning Latin did for us."

"I shall keep up my Latin and Greek," observed George, very independently, "although I may have to leave school."

"Why need you keep it up?" asked Mr. Chattaway, turning to look full at George.

"Why?" echoed George. "I like it, for one thing. And a knowledge of the classics is necessary to a gentleman, nowadays."

"Necessary to what?" cried Mr. Chattaway.

"To a gentleman," repeated George.

"Oh," said Mr. Chattaway. "Do you think of being one?"

"Yes, I do," repeated George, in a tone as decisive as any ever used by his step-mother.

This bold assertion nearly took away the breath of Farmer Apperley. Had George Ryle announced his intention of becoming a Botany Bay convict, Mr. Apperley's consternation had been scarcely less. The same word bears different constructions to different minds. That of "gentleman" in the mouth of George, could only bear one to the plain and simple farmer.

"Hey, lad! What wild notions have ye been getting in your head?" he asked.

"George," spoke Mrs. Ryle almost at the same moment, "are you going to give me trouble at the very outset? There is nothing for you to look forward to but work. Your father said it."

"Of course I look forward to work, mamma," returned George, as cheerfully as he could speak that sad afternoon. "But that will not prevent my being a gentleman."

"George, I fancy you may be somewhat misusing terms," remarked the surgeon, who was an old inhabitant of that rustic district, and a little more advanced than the rest. "What you meant to say was, that you would be a good, honourable, upright man; not a mean one. "Was it not?"

"Yes," said George, after an imperceptible hesitation. "Something of that sort."

"The boy did not express himself clearly, you see," said Mr. King, looking round on the rest. "He means well."

"Don't you ever talk about being a gentleman again, my lad," cried Farmer Apperley, with a sagacious nod. "It would make the neighbours think you were going on for bad ways. A gentleman is one who follows the hounds in white smalls and a scarlet coat, and goes to dinners and drinks wine, and never puts his hands to anything, but leads an idle life."

"That is not the sort of gentleman I meant," said George.

"It is to be hoped it's not," emphatically replied the farmer. "A man may do this if he has a good fat banker's book, George, but not else."

George made no remark. To have explained how very different his ideas of a gentleman were from those of Farmer Apperley's might have involved him in a long conversation. His silence was looked suspiciously upon by Mr. Chattaway.

"Where idle and roving notions are taken up, there's only one cure for them!" he remarked, in short, uncompromising tones. "And that is hard work."

But that George's spirit was subdued, he might have hotly answered that he had taken up neither idle nor roving notions. As it was, he sat in silence.

"I doubt whether it will be prudent to keep George at home," said Mrs. Ryle, speaking generally, but not to Mr. Chattaway. "He is too young to do much good on the farm. And there's John Pinder."

"John Pinder would do his best, no doubt," said Mr. Chattaway.

"The question is—if I do resolve to put George out, what can I put him to?" resumed Mrs. Ryle.

"Papa thought it best that I should stay on the farm," interposed George, his heart beating a shade quicker.

"He thought it best that I should exercise my own judgment in the matter," corrected Mrs. Ryle. "The worst is, it takes money to place a lad out," she added, looking at Farmer Apperley.

"It does that," replied the farmer.

"There's nothing like a trade for boys," said Mr. Chattaway, impressively. "They learn to get a good living, and they are kept out of mischief. It appears to me that Mrs. Ryle will have enough expense upon her hands, without the cost and keep of George being added to it. What service can so young a boy do the farm?"

"True," mused Mrs. Ryle, agreeing for once with Mr. Chattaway. "He could not be of much use at present. But the cost of placing him out?"

"Of course he could not," repeated Mr. Chattaway, with an eagerness which might have betrayed his motive, but that he coughed it down. "Perhaps I may be able to manage the putting him out for you, without cost. I know of an eligible place where there's a vacancy. The trade is a good one, too."

"I am not going to any trade," spoke George, looking Mr. Chattaway full in the face.

"You are going where Mrs. Ryle thinks fit that you shall go," returned Mr. Chattaway, in his hard, cold tones. "If I can get you into the establishment of Wall and Barnes without premium, it will be a first-rate thing for you."

All the blood in George Ryle's body seemed to rush to his face. Poor though they had become in point of money, trade had been unknown in their family, and its sound in George's ears, as applied to himself, was something terrible. "That is a retail shop!" he cried, rising from his seat in a commotion.

"Well?" said Mr. Chattaway.

They remained gazing at each other. George with his changing face, flushing to crimson, fading to paleness; Mr. Chattaway with his composed, leaden one. His light eyes were sternly directed to George, but he did not glance at Mrs. Ryle. George was the first to speak.

"You shall never force me there, Mr. Chattaway."

Mr. Chattaway rose from his seat, took George by the shoulder, and turned him towards the window. The view did not take in much of the road to Barbrook; but a glimpse of it might be caught sight of here and there, winding along in the distance.

"Boy! do you remember what was carried down that road this afternoon—what you followed next to, with your younger brother? *He* said that you were not to cross your mother, but to obey her in all things. These are early moments to begin to turn against your father's dying charge."

George sat down, his brain throbbing, his heart beating. He did not see his duty very distinctly before him then. His father certainly had charged him to obey his mother's requests; he had left him entirely subject to her control; but George felt perfectly sure that his father would never have placed him in a retail shop; would not have allowed him to enter one.

Mr. Chattaway continued talking, but the boy heard him not. He was bending towards Mrs. Ryle, enlarging persuasively upon the advantages of the plan. He knew that Wall and Barnes had taken a boy into their house without premium, he said, and he believed he could induce them to waive it in George's case. He and Wall had been at school together; had passed many an impatient hour over the Latin, previously spoken of; and he often called in to have a chat with him in passing. Wall was a ten-thousand-pound man now; and George might become the same in time.

"How would you like to place Christopher at it, Mr. Chattaway?" asked George, his breast heaving rebelliously.

"Christopher!" indignantly responded Mr. Chattaway. "Christopher's heir to Trev—— Christopher isn't you," he concluded, cutting his first retort short. In the presence of

Mrs. Ryle it might not be altogether prudent to allude to the heirship of Cris to Trevlyn Hold.

The sum named conciliated the ear of Mr. Apperley, otherwise he had not listened with any favour to the plan. "Ten thousand pounds! And Wall but a middle-aged man! That's worth thinking of, George."

"I could never live in a shop; the close air, the confinement, would stifle me," said George, with a groan, putting aside for the moment his more forcible objections.

"You'd rather live in a thunder-storm, with the rain coming down on your head in bucketfuls," said Mr. Chattaway, sarcastically.

"A great deal," said George.

Farmer Apperley did not detect the irony of Mr. Chattaway's remark, or the bitterness of the answer. "You'll say next, boy, that you'd rather go for a sailor, and be exposed to the weather night and day, perched midway between sky and water!"

"So I would," was George's truthful answer. "Mamma! let me stay at the farm!" he cried, the nervous motion of his hands, the strained countenance, proving how momentous was the question to his grieved heart. "You do not know how useful I should soon become! And papa wished it."

Mrs. Ryle shook her head. "You are too young, George, to be of use. No."

George seemed to turn white; face, and heart, and all. He was approaching Mrs. Ryle with an imploring gesture; but Mr. Chattaway caught his arm and pushed him towards his seat again. "George, if I were you, I would not, on this day, cross my mother."

George glanced at her. Not a shade of love, of relenting, was there on her countenance. Cold, haughty, self-willed, it always was; but more cold, more haughty, more self-willed than usual now. He turned and left the room, his heart bursting, crossed the kitchen, and passed into the room whence his father had been carried only two hours before.

"Oh, papa! papa!" he sobbed, "if you were only back again!"

CHAPTER VIII.

INCIPIENT REBELLION.

Borne down by the powers above him, George Ryle could only succumb to their will. Persuaded by the eloquence of Mr. Chattaway, Mrs. Ryle became convinced that placing George in the establishment of Wall and Barnes was the most appropriate thing that could be found for him, the most promising. The wonder was, that she should have brought herself to listen to Chattaway at all, or have entertained for a moment any proposal emanating from him. There could have been but one solution to the riddle: that of her own anxiety to get George settled in something away from home. Down deep in the heart of Mrs. Ryle, there was seated a deep sense of injury—of injustice—of wrong. It had been seated there ever since the death of Squire Trevlyn, influencing her actions, warping her temper—the question of the heirship of Trevlyn. Her father had bequeathed Trevlyn Hold to Chattaway; and Chattaway's son was now the heir; whereas, in her opinion, it was her son, Trevlyn Ryle, who should be occupying that desirable distinction. How Mrs. Ryle reconciled it to her conscience to ignore the claims of young Rupert Trevlyn, she best knew.

She did ignore them. She cast no more thought to Rupert in connection with the succession to Trevlyn, than if he had not been in existence. He had been barred from it by the Squire's will, and there it ended. But, failing heirs to her two dead brothers, it was *her* son who should have come in. Was she not the eldest daughter? What right had that worm, Chattaway, to have insinuated himself into the home of the Squire? into—it may be said—his heart? and so willed over to himself the inheritance?

A bitter fact to Mrs. Ryle; a fact which rankled in her heart by night and by day; a turning from the path of justice which she firmly intended to see turned back again. She saw not how it was to be accomplished; she knew not by what means it could be brought about; she divined not yet how she should help in it; but she was fully determined that it should be Trevlyn Ryle eventually to possess Trevlyn Hold. Never, Cris Chattaway.