

Proofs will be wanted before Charles here can assume his position as your heir."

"I think there will be no difficulty about that, Nancarrow," replied Sir Charles. "When I came back to England to assume the title and the estates I wrote out a statement of all that had happened so far as I knew, described the marks my son carried and swore to it before a commissioner of oaths. Then I sealed it up with my marriage certificate, and with this boy's baptismal certificate, and deposited it at the family lawyer's. I fancy that, with this portrait, will be sufficient, whilst there is no one likely to contest the claim. The death of poor Vernon has made things much simpler."

"Yes," agreed Sir James, "it has certainly made things much simpler." He turned towards Charles Rowley.

"You will like to take the news," he said. "My wife and Janet will be growing impatient."

The young man looked towards Sir Charles.

"If you will excuse me—father.." There was a slight hesitation before the last word, which Sir Charles noticed and smiled at, but there was no hesitation about his own answer.

"Certainly, my boy."

CHAPTER XXX

AT HOME

ON the terrace, Lady Nancarrow walked to and fro with Janet.

"It would be very dreadful for Sir Charles if we should happen to have made a mistake," she said, breaking a silence that she found difficult.

"But do you really think that is possible?" asked Janet.

"No, I do not think my husband would have gone as far as he has if there had been the slightest doubt! But if we should have made the mistake, Janet—what will you do?"

"What do you mean?" asked Janet, though the sudden flush on her face revealed that she was not altogether ignorant of the meaning of the question.

"I mean about Mr. Rowley. Will it make any difference, my dear?"

"None at all," answered Janet quickly. "Why should it? I did not know anything about his being Sir Charles's heir when he saved my life at the *Murland*, and I did not know it when, when——"

The flush in her face deepened as she broke off, leaving the sentence unfinished; then unexpectedly she gave a little laugh.

"'A rose by any other name,' you know, Lady Nancarrow, and a man—well, his name is only a small part of him."

"I understand, my dear," answered Lady Nancarrow, and then cried excitedly:

"He is coming, Janet, and he knows the truth. I can see it in his face—and it is all right! This is not the place for me to linger in. You will want to be alone. I am going inside to congratulate Sir Charles. You can do what you like with his son."

She laughed and turned into a conservatory, through which she could make her way into the house, whilst Janet moved to meet her lover. Her face was glad, her eyes were radiant, as she greeted him.

"What do you think about our secret now? Was it——?"

"You know?" he cried quickly. "You know who I really am?"

"Yes," she answered. "I have known ever since Vernon made his confession. And I am very glad for Sir Charles's sake as well as yours."

"And it will make no difference?"

"No, why should it?" she asked.

"I am glad of that," he said, "and very glad that I won you before we knew what we know now. But I wonder what my father will think of our engagement?"

"You forget," she answered smilingly. "He knows me very well. I am rather a favourite with him."

"I am pleased to know that, and I wonder what your father will think of me?"

Janet gave a little laugh. "Well, if you require reassuring you have but to think that I am perfectly satisfied, and that——"

"Is the best assurance of all! Though, naturally, I feel very much at sea."

"Perhaps in a little time, when you know us all better," replied Janet smilingly, "you will feel very much at home."

THE END