

THE DESBOROUGH CONNECTIONS.

By BRET HARTE.

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"Then it isn't a question of property or next of kin" said the consul. "Lord! no!" said the lady, vivaciously. "Why, goodness me! I reckon old Desborough could at any time before he died have bought up and bought out the whole lot of his relatives on this side of the big pond—no matter what they were worth. No—it's only a matter of curiosity and just sociable news."

went over and invited her with a little party. She's a Miss Desborough." The consul gave a slight start and was aware that Beverdale was looking at him. "Perhaps you know her?" said Beverdale. "Just enough to agree with that she is charming," said the consul. "I dined with them and saw them at the consulate."

It was on the consul's lips to say that the late Mr. Desborough was an Englishman, and even to speak playfully of his proposed quest, but a sudden instinct withheld him. After all, perhaps it was only a caprice, or idea, that had forgotten—perhaps, that she knew that they were already ashamed of them. They had evidently "got on" in English society, if that was their real intent, and doubtless Miss Desborough, by this time, was quite as content with the chance of being related to the earl of Beverdale through his son and heir, Algonzo, as if they found a real Lord Desborough among their own relatives. The consul knew that Lord Beverdale was not a rich man, that like most men of old family he was not a slave to class prejudice, indeed the consul had seen every now and then the strange or out of the pages of a novel who were. So he said, with a slight affectation of authority, that there was a little doubt of the young lady's wealth as there was of her personal attractions.

They were nearing the house through a long avenue of chestnuts, whose variegated leaves were already beginning to strew the ground beneath, and they could see the vista open upon the yellow October sunshine lighting up the millioned windows of the story. In the sunshine, dressed in a shoring suit, stood a tall, clean-lined young fellow, whom the consul recognized at once as Lord Algonzo, the son of his companion. As if to accent the grace of his vision of youth and vigor, near him, in the shadow, an old man had halted, but in hand, still holding the rake with which he had been gathering the dead leaves in the avenue, his back bent, partly with years, partly with the oblation of a servant. There was something so marked in this contrast, in this old man standing in the shadow of the fading year, himself as dried and withered as leaves he was raking, yet pausing to make his reverence to this passing sunshine of youth and prosperity in the presence of his coming master, that the consul, as they swept by, looked after him with a stirring of pity.



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there. There was a grim church on the hill, a blackened and weather-beaten stone, with a few grim Amelyns reposing cross-legged in the channel, but the character of the village was as different from the Priory as if it were in another country. They stopped at the rectory, where Miss Amelyn provided herself with certain doles and gifts, which the American girl would have augmented with a \$5 note, but for Miss Amelyn's horrified concern. "As many shillings would do and they would be as grateful," she said. "More they wouldn't understand."

"Then keep it and dole it out as you like," said Sadie, quickly. "But I don't think that—that Lord Beverdale would quite approve—" hesitated Miss Amelyn. "The pretty brow of her companion knit and her gray eyes flashed vivaciously. "What has he to do with it?" she said, pertly. "Besides, you say these are not his poor. Take that \$5 note—or—will double it, let it change into sovereigns at the station and hand 'em round to every man, woman and child."

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