

THE PORTRAIT.

I remember perfectly how it happened. I received an invitation from my old friend and fellow artist, Stanley Harcourt, to spend a week with him at Harcourt park. It was early in the season, and only a few other guests were invited. Although my friendship with Stanley dated back to days at Eton, I had never visited the park, and I accepted with alacrity.

As I entered the room I saw it was the only child of old Harold Hartwell. She was beautiful—wonderfully beautiful—but absolutely without heart. At least so I am told—of course I know nothing of her, for this was over 30 years ago. But her beauty is almost a tradition. There is a miniature of her, which I will show you later, and you can judge for yourself.

"Before her marriage with Lord Stanley she had been engaged to Cecil Ritchie, her cousin. You know of the Ritchies?" "I do not." "He was broken off, and she married my uncle. He was a better match, of course, but now, when I think of it all, I believe she always cared for Ritchie."

"Well, my uncle had the west rooms fitted up, and she came here a bride. I will show you the second one later. It is painted in its entirety in oak—rather interesting in its way. The portrait of the book I was trying with fell to the floor. "It was only a short time after the wedding that a very strange thing happened."

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