

1911

CONTENTS

- CHAPTER I.** THE DRAMA OF LITTLE THINGS
- CHAPTER II.** IN THE WOOD
- CHAPTER III.** AN UNEXPECTED RECOGNITION
- CHAPTER IV.** SECRETS
- CHAPTER V.** THE WOMAN AND THE MAN
- CHAPTER VI.** THE MAN AND THE WOMAN
- CHAPTER VII.** THE SECRETARY
- CHAPTER VIII.** AT MIDNIGHT
- CHAPTER IX.** AFTERWARDS
- CHAPTER X.** A DIFFICULT POSITION
- CHAPTER XI.** BLACKMAIL
- CHAPTER XII.** THE CONSPIRACY
- CHAPTER XIII.** A FRIEND IN NEED
- CHAPTER XIV.** MISS GREEBY, DETECTIVE
- CHAPTER XV.** GUESSWORK
- CHAPTER XVI.** THE LAST STRAW
- CHAPTER XVII.** ON THE TRAIL
- CHAPTER XVIII.** AN AMAZING ACCUSATION
- CHAPTER XIX.** MOTHER COCKLESHELL
- CHAPTER XX.** THE DESTINED END
- CHAPTER XXI.** A FINAL SURPRISE

Popular Detective Stories by Fergus Hume

RED MONEY

CHAPTER I.

THE DRAMA OF LITTLE THINGS.

"Gypsies! How very delightful! I really must have my fortune told. The dear things know all about the future."

As Mrs. Belgrove spoke she peered through her lorgnette to see if anyone at the breakfast-table was smiling. The scrutiny was necessary, since she was the oldest person present, and there did not appear to be any future for her, save that very certain one connected with a funeral. But a society lady of sixty, made up to look like one of forty (her maid could do no more), with an excellent digestion and a constant desire, like the Athenians of old, for "Something New!" can scarcely be expected to dwell upon such a disagreeable subject as death. Nevertheless, Mrs. Belgrove could not disguise from herself that her demise could not be postponed for many more years, and examined the faces of the other guests to see if they thought so too. If anyone did, he and she politely suppressed a doubtful look and applauded the suggestion of a fortune-telling expedition.

"Let us make up a party and go," said the hostess, only too thankful to find something to amuse the house-party for a few hours. "Where did you say the gypsies were, Garvington?"

"In the Abbot's Wood," replied her husband, a fat, small round-faced man, who was methodically devouring a large breakfast.

"That's only three miles away. We can drive or ride."

"Or motor, or bicycle, or use Shanks' mare," remarked Miss Greeby rather vulgarly. Not that any one minded such a speech from her, as her vulgarity was merely regarded as eccentricity, because she had money and brains, an exceedingly long tongue, and a memory of other people's failings to match.

Lord Garvington made no reply, as breakfast, in his opinion, was much too serious a business to be interrupted. He reached for the marmalade, and requested that a bowl of Devonshire cream should be passed along. His wife, who was lean and anxious-looking even for an August hostess, looked at him wrathfully. He never gave her any assistance in entertaining their numerous guests, yet always insisted that the house should be full for the shooting season. And being poor for a titled pair, they could not afford to entertain even a shoeblack, much less a crowd of hungry sportsmen and a horde of frivolous women, who required to be amused expensively. It was really too bad of Garvington.

At this point the reflections of the hostess were interrupted by Miss Greeby, who always had a great deal to say, and who always tried, as an American would observe, "to run the circus." "I suppose you men will go out shooting as usual?" she said in her sharp, clear voice.

The men present collectively declared that such was their intention, and that they had come to "The Manor" for that especial purpose, so it was useless to ask them, or any one of them, to go on a fortune-telling expedition when they could find anything of that sort in Bond Street. "And it's all a lot of rot, anyhow," declared one sporting youth with obviously more muscle and money than brains; "no one can tell my fortune."

"I can, Billy. You will be Prime Minister," flashed out Miss Greeby, at which there was a general laugh. Then Garvington threw a bombshell.

"You'd better get your fortunes told to-day, if you want to," he grunted, wiping his mustache; "for to-morrow I'm going to have these rotters moved off my land straight away. They're thieves and liars."

"So are many other people," snapped Miss Greeby, who had lost heavily at bridge on the previous night and spoke feelingly.

Her host paid no attention to her. "There's been a lot of burglaries in this neighborhood of late. I daresay these gypsies are mixed up in them."

"Burglaries!" cried Mrs. Belgrove, and turned pale under her rouge, as she remembered that she had her diamonds with her.

"Oh, it's all right! Don't worry," said Garvington, pushing back his chair. "They won't try on any games in this house while I'm here. If any one tries to get in I'll shoot the beast."

"Is that allowed by law?" asked an army officer with a shrug.

"I don't know and I don't care," retorted Garvington. "An Englishman's house is his castle, you know, and he can jolly well shoot any one who tries to get into it. Besides, I shouldn't mind potting a burglar. Great sport."

"You'd ask his intentions first, I presume," said Lady Garvington tartly.

"Not me. Any one getting into the house after dark doesn't need his intentions to be asked. I'd shoot."

"What about Romeo?" asked a poetic-looking young man. "He got into Juliet's house, but did not come as a burglar."

"He came as a guest, I believe," said a quiet, silvery voice at the end of the table, and every one turned to look at Lady Agnes Pine, who had spoken.

She was Garvington's sister, and the wife of Sir Hubert Pine, the millionaire, who was absent from the house party on this occasion. As a rule, she spoke little, and constantly wore a sad expression on her pale and beautiful face. And Agnes Pine really was beautiful, being one of those tall, slim willowy-looking women who always look well and act charmingly. And, indeed, her undeniable charm of manner probably had more to do with her reputation as a handsome woman than her actual physical grace. With her dark hair and dark eyes, her Greek features and ivory skin faintly tinted with a tea-rose hue, she looked very lovely and very sad. Why she should be, was a puzzle to many women, as being the wife of a superlatively rich man, she had all the joys that money could bring her. Still it was hinted on good authority—but no one ever heard the name of the authority—that Garvington being poor had forced her into marrying Sir Hubert, for whom she did not care in the least. People said that her cousin Noel Lambert was the husband of her choice, but

that she had sacrificed herself, or rather had been compelled to do so, in order that Garvinton might be set on his legs. But Lady Agnes never gave any one the satisfaction of knowing the exact truth. She moved through the social world like a gentle ghost, fulfilling her duties admirably, but apparently indifferent to every one and everything. "Clippin' to look at," said the young men, "but tombs to talk to. No sport at all." But then the young men did not possess the key to Lady Agnes Pine's heart. Nor did her husband apparently.

Her voice was very low and musical, and every one felt its charm. Garvinton answered her question as he left the room. "Romeo or no Romeo, guest or no guest," he said harshly, "I'll shoot any beast who tries to enter my house. Come on, you fellows. We start in half an hour for the coverts."

When the men left the room, Miss Greeby came and sat down in a vacant seat near her hostess. "What did Garvinton mean by that last speech?" she asked with a significant look at Lady Agnes.

"Oh, my dear, when does Garvinton ever mean anything?" said the other woman fretfully. "He is so selfish; he leaves me to do everything."

"Well," drawled Miss Greeby with a pensive look on her masculine features, "he looked at Agnes when he spoke."

"What do you mean?" demanded Lady Garvinton sharply.

Miss Greeby gave a significant laugh. "I notice that Mr. Lambert is not in the house," she said carelessly. "But some one told me he was near at hand in the neighborhood. Surely Garvinton doesn't mean to shoot him."

"Clara." The hostess sat up very straight, and a spot of color burned on either sallow cheek. "I am surprised at you. Noel is staying in the Abbot's Wood Cottage, and indulging in artistic work of some sort. But he can come and stay here, if he likes. You don't mean to insinuate that he would climb into the house through a window after dark like a burglar?"

"That's just what I do mean," retorted Miss Greeby daringly, "and if he does, Garvinton will shoot him. He said so."

"He said nothing of the sort," cried Lady Garvinton, angrily rising.

"Well, he meant it. I saw him looking at Agnes. And we know that Sir Hubert is as jealous as Othello. Garvinton is on guard I suppose, and —"

"Will you hold your tongue?" whispered the mistress of the Manor furiously, and she would have shaken Miss Greeby, but that she had borrowed money from her and did not dare to incur her enmity. "Agnes will hear you; she is looking this way; can't you see?"

"As if I cared," laughed Miss Greeby, pushing out her full lower lip in a contemptuous manner. However, for reasons best known to herself, she held her peace, although she would have scorned the idea that the hint of her hostess made her do so.

Lady Garvinton saw that her guests were all chattering with one another, and that the men were getting ready to leave for the day's shooting, so she went to discuss the dinner in the housekeeper's room. But all the time she and the housekeeper were arguing what Lord Garvinton would like in the way of food, the worried woman was reflecting on what Miss Greeby had said. When the menu was finally settled—no easy task when it concerned the master of the house—Lady Garvinton sought out Mrs. Belgrove. That juvenile ancient was sunning herself on the terrace, in the hope of renewing her waning vitality, and, being alone, permitted herself to look old. She brisked up with a kittenish purr when disturbed, and remarked that the Hengishire air was like champagne. "My spirits are positively wild and wayward," said the would-be Hebe with a desperate attempt to be youthful.

"Ah, you haven't got the house to look after," sighed Lady Garvinton, with a weary look, and dropped into a basket chair to pour out her woes to Mrs. Belgrove. That person was extremely discreet, as years of society struggling had taught her the value of silence. Her discretion in this respect brought her many confidences, and she was renowned for giving advice which was never taken.

"What's the matter, my dear? You look a hundred," said Mrs. Belgrove, putting up her lorgnette with a chuckle, as if she had made an original observation. But she had not, for Lady Garvinton al-

ways appeared worn and weary, and sallow, and untidy. She was the kind of absent-minded person who depended upon pins to hold her garments together, and who would put on her tiara crookedly for a drawing-room.

"Clara Greeby's a cat," said poor, worried Lady Garvinton, hunting for her pocket handkerchief, which was rarely to be found.

"Has she been making love to Garvinton?"

"Pooh! No woman attracts Garvinton unless she can cook, or knows something about a kitchen range. I might as well have married a soup tureen. I'm sure I don't know why I ever did marry him," lamented the lady, staring at the changing foliage of the park trees. "He's a pauper and a pig, my dear, although I wouldn't say so to every one. I wish my mother hadn't insisted that I should attend cooking classes."

"What on earth has that to do with it?"

"To do with what?" asked Lady Garvinton absentmindedly. "I don't know what you're talking about, I'm sure. But mother knew that Garvinton was fond of a good dinner, and made me attend those classes, so as to learn to talk about French dishes. We used to flirt about soups and creams and haunches of venison, until he thought that I was as greedy as he was. So he married me, and I've been attending to his meals ever since. Why, even for our honeymoon we went to Mont St. Michel. They make splendid omelettes there, and Garvinton ate all the time. Ugh!" and the poor lady shuddered.

Mrs. Belgrove saw that her companion was meandering, and would never come to the point unless forced to face it, so she rapped her knuckles with the lorgnette. "What about Clara Greeby?" she demanded sharply.

"She's a cat!"

"Oh, we're all cats, mewling or spitting as the fit takes us," said Mrs. Belgrove comfortably. "I can't see why cat should be a term of opprobrium when applied to a woman. Cats are charmingly pretty animals, and know what they want, also how to get it. Well, my dear?"

"I believe she was in love with Noel herself," ruminated Lady Garvinton.

"Who was in love? Come to the point, my dear Jane."

"Clara Greeby."

Mrs. Belgrove laughed. "Oh, that ancient history. Every one who was anybody knew that Clara would have given her eyes—and very ugly eyes they are—to have married Noel Lambert. I suppose you mean him? Noel isn't a common name. Quite so. You mean him. Well, Clara wanted to buy him. He hasn't any money, and as a banker's heiress she is as rich as a Jew. But he wouldn't have her."

"Why wouldn't he?" asked Lady Garvinton, waking up—she had been reflecting about a new soup which she hoped would please her husband. "Clara has quite six thousand a year, and doesn't look bad when her maid makes her dress in a proper manner. And, talking about maids, mine wants to leave, and—"

"She's too like Boadicea," interrupted Mrs. Belgrove, keeping her companion to the subject of Miss Greeby. "A masculine sort of hus-sy. Noel is far too artistic to marry such a maypole. She's six foot two, if she's an inch, and her hands and feet—" Mrs. Belgrove shud-dered with a gratified glance at her own slim fingers.

"You know the nonsense that Garvinton was talking; about shooting a burglar," said the other woman vaguely. "Such nonsense, for I'm sure no burglar would enter a house filled with nothing but Early Victorian furniture."

"Well? Well? Well?" said Mrs. Belgrove impatiently.

"Clara Beeby thought that Garvinton meant to shoot Noel."

"Why, in heaven's name! Because Noel is his heir?"

"I'm sure I can't help it if I've no children," said Lady Garvinton, going off on another trail—the one suggested by Mrs. Belgrove's remark. "I'd be a happier woman if I had something else to attend to than dinners. I wish we all lived on roots, so that Garvinton could dig them up for himself."

"My dear, he'd send you out with a trowel to do that," said Mrs. Belgrove humorously. "But why does Garvinton want to shoot Noel?"

"Oh, he doesn't. I never said he did. Clara Greeby made the remark. You see, Noel loved Agnes before she married Hubert, and I believe he loves her still, which isn't right, seeing she's married, and isn't half so good-looking as she was. And Noel stopping at that cottage in the Abbot's Wood painting in water-colors. I think he is, but I'm not sure if it isn't in oils, and the —"

"Well? Well? Well?" asked Mrs. Belgrove again.

"It isn't well at all, when you think what a tongue Clara Greeby has," snapped Lady Garvinton. "She said if Noel came to see Agnes by night, Garvinton, taking him for a burglar, might shoot him. She insisted that he looked at Agnes when he was talking about burglars, and meant that."

"What nonsense!" cried Mrs. Belgrove vigorously, at last having arrived at a knowledge of why Lady Garvinton had sought her. "Noel can come here openly, so there is no reason he should steal here after dark."

"Well, he's romantic, you know, dear. And romantic people always prefer windows to doors and darkness to light. The windows here are so insecure," added Lady Garvinton, glancing at the facade above her untidy hair. "He could easily get in by sticking a penknife in between the upper and lower sash of the window. It would be quite easy."

"What nonsense you talk, Jane," said Mrs. Belgrove, impatiently. "Noel is not the man to come after a married woman when her husband is away. I have known him since he was a Harrow schoolboy, so I have every right to speak. Where is Sir Hubert?"

"He is at Paris or Peking, or something with a 'P,'" said Lady Garvinton in her usual vague way. "I'm sure I don't know why he can't take Agnes with him. They get on very well for a married couple."

"All the same she doesn't love him."

"He loves her, for I'm sure he's that jealous that he can't scarcely bear her out of his sight."

"It seems to me that he can," remarked Mrs. Belgrove dryly. "Since he is at Paris or Peking and she is here."

"Garvinton is looking after her, and he owes Sir Hubert too much, not to see that Agnes is all right."

Mrs. Belgrove peered at Lady Garvinton through her lorgnette. "I think you talk a great deal of nonsense, Jane, as I said before," she observed. "I don't suppose for one moment that Agnes thinks of Noel, or Noel of Agnes."

"Clara Greeby says —"

"Oh, I know what she says and what she wishes. She would like to get Noel into trouble with Sir Hubert over Agnes, simply because he will not marry her. As to her chatter about burglars —"

"Garvinton's chatter," corrected her companion.

"Well, then, Garvinton's. It's all rubbish. Agnes is a sweet girl, and —"

"Girl?" Lady Garvinton laughed disdainfully. "She is twenty-five."

"A mere baby. People cannot be called old until they are seventy or eighty. It is a bad habit growing old. I have never encouraged it myself. By the way, tell me something about Sir Hubert Pine. I have only met him once or twice. What kind of a man is he?"

"Tall, and thin, and dark, and —"

"I know his appearance. But his nature?"

"He's jealous, and can be very disagreeable when he likes. I don't know who he is, or where he came from. He made his money out of penny toys and South African investments. He was a member of Parliament for a few years, and helped his party so much with money that he was knighted. That's all I know of him, except that he is very mean."

"Mean? What you tell me doesn't sound mean."

"I'm talking of his behavior to Garvinton," explained the hostess, touching her ruffled hair, "he doesn't give us enough money."

"Why should he give you any?" asked Mrs. Belgrove bluntly.

"Well, you see, dear, Garvington would never have allowed his sister to marry a nobody, unless—"

"Unless the nobody paid for his footing. I quite understand. Every one knows that Agnes married the man to save her family from bankruptcy. Poor girl!" Mrs. Belgrove sighed. "And she loved Noel. What a shame that she couldn't become his wife!"

"Oh, that would have been absurd," said Lady Garvington pettishly. "What's the use of Hunger marrying Thirst? Noel has no money, just like ourselves, and if it hadn't been for Hubert this place would have been sold long ago. I'm telling you secrets, mind."

"My dear, you tell me nothing that everybody doesn't know."

"Then what is your advice?"

"About what, my dear?"

"About what I have been telling you. The burglar, and—"

"I have told you before, that it is rubbish. If a burglar does come here I hope Lord Garvington will shoot him, as I don't want to lose my diamonds."

"But if the burglar is Noel?"

"He won't be Noel. Clara Greeby has simply made a nasty suggestion which is worthy of her. But if you're afraid, why not get her to marry Noel?"

"He won't have her," said Lady Garvington dolefully.

"I know he won't. Still a persevering woman can do wonders, and Clara Greeby has no self-respect. And if you think Noel is too near, get Agnes to join her husband in Pekin."

"I think it's Paris."

"Well then, Paris. She can buy new frocks."

"Agnes doesn't care for new frocks. Such simple tastes she has, wanting to help the poor. Rubbish, I call it."

"Why, when her husband helps Lord Garvington?" asked Mrs. Belgrove artlessly.

Lady Garvington frowned. "What horrid things you say."

"I only repeat what every one is saying."

"Well, I'm sure I don't care," cried Lady Garvinton recklessly, and rose to depart on some vague errand. "I'm only in the world to look after dinners and breakfasts. Clara Greeby's a cat making all this fuss about —"

"Hush! There she is."

Lady Garvinton fluttered round, and drifted towards Miss Greeby, who had just stepped out on to the terrace. The banker's daughter was in a tailor-made gown with a man's cap and a man's gloves, and a man's boots—at least, as Mrs. Belgrove thought, they looked like that—and carried a very masculine stick, more like a bludgeon than a cane. With her ruddy complexion and ruddy hair, and piercing blue eyes, and magnificent figure—for she really had a splendid figure in spite of Mrs. Belgrove's depreciation—she looked like a gigantic Norse goddess. With a flashing display of white teeth, she came along swinging her stick, or whirling her shillalah, as Mrs. Belgrove put it, and seemed the embodiment of coarse, vigorous health.

"Taking a sun-bath?" she inquired brusquely and in a loud baritone voice. "Very wise of you two elderly things. I am going for a walk."

Mrs. Belgrove was disagreeable in her turn. "Going to the Abbot's Wood?"

"How clever of you to guess," Miss Greeby smiled and nodded. "Yes, I'm going to look up Lambert"; she always spoke of her male friends in this hearty fashion. "He ought to be here enjoying himself instead of living like a hermit in the wilds."

"He's painting pictures," put in Lady Garvinton. "Do hermits paint?"

"No. Only society women do that," said Miss Greeby cheerfully, and Mrs. Belgrove's faded eyes flashed. She knew that the remark was meant for her, and snapped back. "Are you going to have your fortune told by the gypsies, dear?" she inquired amiably. "They might tell you about your marriage."

"Oh, I daresay, and if you ask they will prophesy your funeral."

"I am in perfect health, Miss Greeby."

"So I should think, since your cheeks are so red."

Lady Garvinton hastily intervened to prevent the further exchange of compliments. "Will you be back to luncheon, or join the men at the coverts?"

"Neither. I'll drop on Lambert for a feed. Where are you going?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said the hostess vaguely. "There's lots to do. I shall know what's to be done, when I think of it," and she drifted along the terrace and into the house like a cloud blown any way by the wind. Miss Greeby looked after her limp figure with a contemptuous grin, then she nodded casually to Mrs. Belgrove, and walked whistling down the terrace steps.

"Cat, indeed!" commented Mrs. Belgrove to herself when she saw Miss Greeby's broad back disappear behind the laurels. "Nothing half so pretty. She's like a great Flanders mare. And I wish Henry VIII was alive to marry her," she added the epithet suggesting that king, "if only to cut her head off."

CHAPTER II.

IN THE WOOD.

Miss Greeby swung along towards her destination with a masculine stride and in as great a hurry as though she had entered herself for a Marathon race. It was a warm, misty day, and the pale August sunshine radiated faintly through the smoky atmosphere. Nothing was clear-cut and nothing was distinct, so hazy was the outlook. The hedges were losing their greenery and had blossomed forth into myriad bunches of ruddy hips and haws, and the usually hard road was soft underfoot because of the penetrating quality of the moist air. There was no wind to clear away the misty greyness, but yellow leaves without its aid dropped from the disconsolate trees. The lately-reaped fields, stretching on either side of the lane down which the lady was walking, presented a stubbled expanse of brown and dim gold, uneven and distressful to the eye. The dying

world was in ruins and Nature had reduced herself to that necessary chaos, out of which, when the coming snow completed its task, she would build a new heaven and a new earth.

An artist might have had some such poetic fancy, and would certainly have looked lovingly on the alluring colors and forms of decay. But Miss Greeby was no artist, and prided herself upon being an aggressively matter-of-fact young woman. With her big boots slapping the ground and her big hands thrust into the pockets of her mannish jacket, she bent her head in a meditative fashion and trudged briskly onward. What romance her hard nature was capable of, was uppermost now, but it had to do strictly with her personal feelings and did not require the picturesque autumn landscape to improve or help it in any way. One man's name suggested romance to bluff, breezy Clara Greeby, and that name was Noel Lambert. She murmured it over and over again to her heart, and her hard face flushed into something almost like beauty, as she remembered that she would soon behold its owner. "But he won't care," she said aloud, and threw back her head defiantly: then after a pause, she breathed softly, "But I shall make him care."

If she hoped to do so, the task was one which required a great amount of skill and a greater amount of womanly courage, neither of which qualities Miss Greeby possessed. She had no skill in managing a man, as her instincts were insufficiently feminine, and her courage was of a purely rough-and-tumble kind. She could have endured hunger and thirst and cold: she could have headed a forlorn hope: she could have held to a sinking ship: but she had no store of that peculiar feminine courage which men don't understand and which women can't explain, however much they may exhibit it. Miss Greeby was an excellent comrade, but could not be the beloved of any man, because of the very limitations of semi-masculinity upon which she prided herself. Noel Lambert wanted a womanly woman, and Lady Agnes was his ideal of what a wife should be. Miss Greeby had in every possible way offered herself for the post, but Lambert had never cared for her sufficiently to endure the thought of passing through life with her beside him. He said she was "a good sort"; and when a man says that of a woman, she may be to him a good friend, or even a platonic chum, but she can never be a desirable wife in his eyes. What Miss Greeby lacked

was sex, and lacking that, lacked everything. It was strange that with her rough common sense she could not grasp this want. But the thought that Lambert required what she could never give—namely, the feminine tenderness which strong masculine natures love—never crossed her very clear and mathematical mind.

So she was bent upon a fool's errand, as she strode towards the Abbot's Wood, although she did not know it. Her aim was to capture Lambert as her husband; and her plan, to accomplish her wish by working on the heart-hunger he most probably felt, owing to the loss of Agnes Pine. If he loved that lady in a chivalrous fashion—and Miss Greeby believed that he did—she was absolutely lost to him as the wife of another man. Lambert would never degrade her into a divorce court appearance. And perhaps, after all, as Miss Greeby thought hopefully, his love for Sir Hubert's wife might have turned to scorn that she had preferred money to true love. But then, again, as Miss Greeby remembered, with a darkening face, Agnes had married the millionaire so as to save the family estates from being sold. Rank has its obligation, and Lambert might approve of the sacrifice, since he was the next heir to the Garvington title. "We shall see what his attitude is," decided Miss Greeby, as she entered the Abbot's Wood, and delayed arranging her future plans until she fully understood his feelings towards the woman he had lost. In the meantime, Lambert would want a comrade, and Miss Greeby was prepared to sink her romantic feelings, for the time being, in order to be one.

The forest—which belonged to Garvington, so long as he paid the interest on the mortgage—was not a very large one. In the old days it had been of greater size and well stocked with wild animals; so well stocked, indeed, that the abbots of a near monastery had used it for many hundred years as a hunting ground. But the monastery had vanished off the face of the earth, as not even its ruins were left, and the game had disappeared as the forest grew smaller and the district around became more populous. A Lambert of the Georgian period—the family name of Lord Garvington was Lambert—had acquired what was left of the monastic wood by winning it at a game of cards from the nobleman who had then owned it. Now it was simply a large patch of green in the middle of a somewhat naked county, for Hengshire is not remarkable for woodlands. There