



CHAPTER VI

A PURPLE EVENING

PERHAPS that morning I had been too happy, for one of the low troubles of life presently did its best to irritate me. Colonel Falkland proposed at luncheon that we should take a four-mile walk to the place where Mr. Adam was digging for Phœnician crockery. For my own part I hate Phœnicia. It is far too old, like a wine that has lost its flavour, and none of its social abuses are distinct enough to excite sympathy. I therefore assented to the plan with an unexpressed reluctance, and reluctance was changed into very distinct annoyance when I found that we were to start as soon as we had done eating. There was, however, no help for it. Miss Falkland and Mr. Adam were coming, unconscious of any inconvenience, and accordingly four of us were presently setting forth. We had soon quitted the town by some break in the wall, and I had no time to look for any fresh curiosities. We took a road that led over the bare plain, and when we had passed the