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DORIS BARUGH.

A Yorkshire Story

BY

KATHARINE S. MACQUOID,

AUTHOR OF

"PATTY," "DIANE," "THROUGH BBITTANY,"

&c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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VNiVERSiTAS STVDIi SALAMANTiNi

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BOOK II.

(CONTINUED)

COURTSHIP

VOL. II.

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DORIS BARUGH.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE ANSWER.

MR. BURNESTON had left his horse at the vicarage while he went across the field to Church Farm.

He could hardly have told why he did this. He had made up his mind to ask Doris to be his wife, let her father's answer to him be what it would, and yet he had hesitated to show this determination beforehand; therefore he had not begun by saying to Mr. Barugh he was on his way to Steersley.

The vicar had been out, and Mr. Burneston met him at the gate where the gardener's boy

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Joshua was holding the squire's horse. Mr. Spencer's rosy face and bright eyes twinkled at the sight of his "young friend," as he generally called Philip Burneston; the vicar loved field sports and a good dinner much better than any sort of reading, but he dearly loved a gossip.

"Coming in for a chat, I hope. No worries, eh? Ralph all right? That's well; come along in." Without waiting for any answer, he turned into the vicarage garden. Mr. Burneston felt impatient.

"Look here, Spencer," he said, "I can't come in, you must let me off to-day. I—I am rather hurried. I'm going to Steersley on business."

The vicar wheeled round; he was short and square in figure, with a broad, flat, kindly face and humorous mouth; he laid his finger on the lappel of Burneston's coat and screwed up his eyes.

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"Business that won't keep, eh, Phil? Well, you know best, but don't be in a hurry, remember there is a proverb which says, 'Look before you leap.' "

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"What *do* you mean?" But the vicar, frightened at his own indiscretion, had turned away and retreated into his house.

The squire muttered a strong-sounding word, and that was all; he did not even thank Joshua, but flung him some pennies and rode away as fast as he could.

The keen east wind had so dried the soil that the dust followed him in a cloud. Perhaps there was a likeness between it and the hazy tumult of his thoughts.

"I don't know what all this means," he said angrily. "What can Spencer have heard unless Raine spoke to him? It's not like Gilbert, though, to chatter," he rode on thinking; "but it was not like him to come all the way from Austin's End, as he did the other day. No," he said angrily, "they all mean well, but they have made a great mistake; they treat me as if they thought I was like Ralph, still a school-boy." Ralph—that was really the thorn that lay beneath all this irritation.

Mr. Burneston did not care for the opinion of the little world of Burneston, or for the more general disapproval of his friends; but he

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shrank with the shyness of a girl or a boy from the disapprobation of this lad of fifteen.

"He's so like his mother, too, in all his notions. I must write to him fully to-night, it's only fair; he will be none the worse for my marriage. I shall probably save money by living quietly at home."

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A picture rose, self-created, to his view which made him laugh at these pricking doubts. Ralph, and all possible annoyance connected with him, faded before the image of Doris and the home she would make for him. It was not only her beauty that filled this man's mind; there was a sweetness of subdued manner, a gentle calmness, very restful when contrasted with, the frivolous, exacting nature of the woman who had been to him as wives are apt, however wrongly, to be to their husbands, a representative type of womankind.

"Doris is perfect now," his thoughts ran; "but there is so much in her to develop that there is no saying how grand a character she may become."

He did not want to depend on his wife for guidance, or even counsel; he liked, after the

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fashion of one who had been an only child, to be left alone and neither teased nor thwarted; but he did not care to be burdened with the weaknesses or indecisions of another mind, and it seemed to him that a very happy and free life lay before him.

Just as he rode into Steersley, flushed with joyful anticipation, the old flat face and screwed up eyes of the vicar came back with his warning.

" 'Look before you leap.' " Mr. Burneston's lip curled as he smiled. "Yes, look when there is fear of a pitfall, or any kind of treachery. I may fall utterly because there is just the possibility that—that Doris cares for some one else; but failing that, I am taking no blind leap."

He felt anxious till he reached the cottage gate lest Doris should be absent, but as he dismounted and told the boy who seemed to be waiting for him, so ready was he in his appearance, to take his horse to the Black Eagle, he heard the sound of music coming from the cottage.

He had long ago given up asking for Mrs.

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Barugh. His visits were ostensibly paid to George, and the little maid had got into the way of throwing open the "drawing-room"—as Mrs. Barugh insisted on calling the little parlour—door and leaving him to announce himself, or if George was out she told the visitor so without any asking.

Mr. Burneston went in eagerly. Doris was rising from the piano, and without looking round he saw that George was absent.

It was the first time they had been alone since the meeting in Steersdale, and Doris was instantly conscious of a change in Mr. Burneston's manner, he seemed so much younger and more impulsive. She looked at him with a puzzled face, and he saw it and went back to his usual reserve.

"I saw your father at the farm just now, he is quite well," he said, "and the sick cow is better."

Her eyes brightened as she looked at him.

"How sympathetic she is!" he thought, while Doris was merely rejoicing that this change would ensure her father's Sunday visit;

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for this had become doubly precious since her disagreement with George.

Before she could answer, her brother's halting step came across the passage, and he was in the room shaking hands with Mr. Burneston.

In Mr. Burneston's absence Doris could think of so much to say to him, but to-day his altered manner had made her shy, and she felt a sense of relief when George came in;

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while her companion experienced a sudden and quite new antipathy to his future brother-in-law. He thought—"How broadly George talks still, spite of the advantages he has had!" and a slight shiver passed through Mr. Burneston as he went on to the reflection, "There is nothing so catching as a bad way of speaking;" he resolved that Doris should not be exposed to this association, longer than could be helped.

George was less cordial than usual. This was the first time the squire's visits had been paid so near together, and it seemed to him that it was his duty to put them on a different footing. Love had sharpened George's eyes, and he, too, saw a marked change in the visitor.

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There was a flutter and eagerness in his manner that surprised the lad, accustomed to look up to his friend with a kind of loving reverence.

The talk flagged; the chief speakers, the squire and George, were each thinking how they could best say their say. Mr. Burneston wanted to be rid of George, and George of Doris.

But the older man's impatience mastered all restraint—moreover, he still considered George as only a boy.

"George," he smiled, "I want to say a few words to your sister; go into the next room till I come to you, there's a good fellow."

George flushed scarlet. Doris was stooping down, looking out a piece of music for Mr. Burneston, and she did not hear distinctly. When she turned round George stood close by the squire, and was speaking to him almost in a whisper. She could not hear what he said, but she thought he looked angry.

"I mun speak to yey, sir, before yu speaks to Doris," George was saying. Mr. Burneston

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hesitated a minute; but the determined manner of the lad impressed him. "I'll come back," he said to Doris, and he led the way into the room opposite.

"Maister Burneston," George began, and then he turned and closed the door.

The squire had been so completely taken by surprise that he had acted on impulse. As recollection came back, anger, too, came with it. He looked sternly at the tall pale youth; but the pleading earnestness of those honest brown eyes kept him silent.

"Maybe it's again all manners what I've getten to say, Maister Burneston; but I cannot put manners before duty." He paused to choose the least offensive way of framing his speech, for he shrank from paining his friend. "Donnut yu think yer visits is bad for Doris? I means," he added nervously, " 'at they spoils t' rest o' her life for her?"

As he went on his voice had grown less and less assured, the words sounded to his sensitive notions so ungrateful.

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He looked timidly at Mr. Burneston, and to his surprise the stern look had changed to one full of radiant happiness.

"Perhaps they do, and if you are right, my dear boy, I had better take care of her for the rest of her life, I think."

George looked stupefied.

"I don't see yer meanin'," he said.

"Well, my boy," Mr. Burneston was now excited out of his usual reticence. "I have had a talk with your father to-day, and I told him I was going to speak to Doris, and—and,"

then the certainty of hope that George's words had given him conquered his reluctance, and he added, "I am going to ask her to be my wife."

George turned an ashy whiteness, and then he flushed up all over his face.

"Then yu'll be doin' us all a great wrang, an' yersel an' Maister Ralph a greater. Let us keep' to oursels, Maister Burneston," the lad raised his head till he looked as tall as his father. "I'm seear gude nivvers cum of a weddin' 'at warn't a match."

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Mr. Burneston smiled, the lad's sturdiness amused him.

"Well, my boy, you are hardly of an age to judge," he said. "Now, if that is all you had to say, I will go back to your sister."

But George stepped forward.

"Nay, sir, nay, better leave t' lass quiet. She's happy enough, an' if she sees yu less oft, she'll maybe think more o' her ain folk. I don't say I can talk tiv her t' same as yu can, but if she has only me she'll learn to be content."

"This is nonsense, I can't listen to you any longer." Mr. Burneston's impatience rose. "I tell you I have spoken to your father—you really must not interfere in what you cannot judge about; though"—he spoke more gently—"if I did not hope to marry your sister, you would of course be perfectly right in all you say."

George laid one hand on the squire's arm, and the other on the door-handle.

"That don't change nowt," he was almost panting with excitement; it seemed to him that the squire was going to do wrong, and that he

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was bound to prevent it. "I mean this. God has made men an' women, an' placed 'em in different states o' life. Ay, an' set up landmarks, such as speech, an' dress, an' looks, too, for that matter, atween 'em, an' if we're to tak' these things to werselves an' break 'em up here an' down there, mebbe we'll all end in more of a maunge than t' Tower of Babel."

"Look here, George," Mr. Burneston's laughing manner jarred the lad's earnestness; "in theory you are perfectly right; this is a practical question, and I have no time really for theories to-day."

He motioned for George to open the door, but the lad would not do this; he withdrew his hand from it, and walked proudly and sorrowfully to the window.

"I've been as blind as any mole," he thought. "Diz mother ken what's doin'?"

Mr. Burneston went quickly into the next room.

Doris had felt puzzled by what had happened; but there was so much reserve between her and George that she could not guess at what

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he might have to say to Mr. Burneston. She only wondered that he had not come back with the squire.

Mr. Burneston walked up to where she sat with a book, and placed himself on a chair beside her.

"Doris," it was the first time he had called her so, and her colour rose in a pink flush that made her lovelier than ever. "Do you recollect the day I met you in Steersdale?"

"Yes," the question was a relief, she looked up as she answered, and saw the strange agitated expression of his face, and the trouble which that talk in Steersdale had created came back.

"Well, then you promised to look on me as a friend. Now, my child, I want you to have complete trust in me—a friend, you know, is always trusted."

Doris was getting bewildered, it seemed as if she was being accused of deceit.

"I have always trusted you," she said proudly.

"Ah, but I want a still deeper trust, I want

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you to tell me—even if I seem very bold in asking—whether, Doris, you have—" he hesitated, spite of all his hope, he so dreaded her answer that he lingered as long as he could—"ever had a dearer friend."

She grew lovelier while he spoke, for the pink flush deepened with wounded pride, and also with disappointment. Instinct told her the real meaning of his question, and she had looked on Mr. Burneston as faultless with regard to delicacy: what right had he to try to force a confidence of this kind? "If I had had any love nonsense," she thought, "does he really suppose me weak and silly enough to talk about it?"

She raised her head slightly, but she did not look at him as she answered,—

"I have never had *any* other friend" with emphasis, "but the Miss Masham I have spoken to you of, my school-fellow."

"Well, then,"—he was glad to have made her angry; any mood seemed easier than her usual calm, smiling reserve—"I want you to let me be your very dearest friend, much

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dearér"—his voice grew very tenderly earnest—"than your friend Miss Masham. Tell me, Doris, can you love me better than anyone else?"

She had raised her eyes in sudden wonder, but they fell quickly, for his eyes told the story that a woman cannot mistake when it is a true one; her heart fluttered in her bosom like some little startled bird, and her breath came and went quickly.

“Tell me, Doris, can you love me better than your dearest friend?” he said softly; but though he was so near her he did not even then take her hand in his; he felt that hers was not the confusion of surprised love, and that the answer he waited for was more than doubtful.

Slowly the eyelids rose, and those wonderful far-off gazing eyes gave him a timid, wavering glance.

“I do not know,” Doris said gently, “I like you more than I can tell.”

Her hands lay in her lap, he lifted one of them to his lips.

“I am satisfied,” he said. “Doris, will you

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say you like me well enough to be with me always, and be my wife?”

He still held her hand, but his clasp tightened as he waited breathlessly.

She tried to speak, but the words would not come, and the beautiful lids veiled her eyes. At last she gave a little nervous smile.

“If you let go my hand I can tell you better;” then as he released it she drew a deep breath. “I had better tell you all the truth; if it is ungrateful, and not what I ought to say, you are so good that you will forgive me—” she stopped.

“Yes—yes,” he said, “go on.”

“To be your wife and to be always away from what I shrink from in life, is too great happiness to think of; but then I know that you have a right to expect I should only think

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of you, and—and I do not think it would be honest to say that I can do this." She clasped both her hands with the effort these words cost her.

There was a little silence. She had confessed more than he had hoped for, but there was a

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feeling of disappointment running through his delight.

"You are so young" he said presently; "your own feelings are scarcely known to you; if you are always happy with me, if you are not conscious of liking anyone better, it is quite possible that you do love me without knowing it—"

Then his feelings broke away from the tight rein that had held them in.

"My darling, I will not ask you to say more now," he said, "you must be my wife. I will soon teach you to love me."

Doris did not feel sure whether she had consented; but when the squire put his arm round her and kissed her blushing cheek, she wished he had not spoken.

"A friend is nicer than a lover," the girl thought.

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CHAPTER VII. AN APPEAL

JOHN BARUGH came over the morning after Mr. Burneston's visit. Dorothy met him at the door, and in the excess of her joy at what had happened, put both arms round his neck and kissed him heartily. John pushed her away.

"Theer, theer, missis, 'at'll deea, thoo'lt smother me—wheear's mah lass—wheear's Doris?" He looked sad and determined, and Dorothy's anger at his repulse melted into fear.

"She's there, dear," she said, and she opened the parlour door.

John took the door-handle and moved her on one side.

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"Ah'll speak tu thoo presentlys," he said sternly. "Ah mun bide aleean wi' Doris."

He walked up to his daughter, kissed her, and then sat down.

He did not look at her; he kept his eyes away, as if he were debating what to say.

Doris had rarely felt so nervous; ever since Mr. Burneston rode away the day before, she had been dreading this interview with her father, although she could have given no more definite cause for her dread than most girls in the same position.

But this silence oppressed her; it was so different from her father's joyful, almost boisterous greetings.

"How's the cow, father?" she said shyly.

"Deng t' coo." Then, checking himself, he looked up at his daughter and smiled. "Ah's a rough chap, lass, when Ah's freeated, an' Ah's yamost oot 'at yed aat t' news Ah's getten about' wards yu, Doris. Waat hev yu sehd tuv t' squire?"

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Doris had grown very rosy while her father spoke; it seemed to her that he was blaming her for Mr. Burneston's proposal.

"Mr. Burneston came yesterday" she said simply, "and asked me to be his wife."

"Geh on," said John hoarsely. "Ah knaws thaat."

The girl hesitated; she could not say she loved Mr. Burneston, and she could not tell her father that she was willing to marry the squire because she shrank from her home life.

John groaned.

"Yu hev sehd yu wad wed him?"

"I suppose so," she said, for, indeed, under this direct questioning, it seemed to Doris that she had given no absolute consent to marry, though both Mr. Burneston and her mother evidently regarded the matter as settled.

It seemed to John Barugh as if his heart must choke him; it was like to burst with the violence of the struggle within. Love and anger and pride were wrenching the strong

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man this way and that, till he could hardly bear the suspense.

He rose up slowly, and moving across to where the girl sat, he laid one hand on her soft, smoothly-waving hair.

"Mah lass," he said gently, "Ah's nivver telled yu, an' mebbe Ah's been wrang, bud Ah's nae gleg at speakin' o' mysen." He paused a moment. "Yey's mair tu mey, Doris, dhen mah ain life. Mebbe yu've thowt Ah waaz a careless fayther tu suffer yu tu bide sae lang fra t' yam. Yu deeadn't ken, lass, how Ah's longed efter mah bairn,—mah heart wur reeght sair a' t' tahme. An' noo Ah's getten her, Ah'd cut off mah reeght hand, lass, if t' wad gi' ye mair joy i' yur life. Noo tell mey, lass, tell yur fayther, whea hes nae secrets fra yu—diz yon man luov yu mich as thaat?"

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Doris had trembled while he spoke; this betrayal of strong feeling stirred her, though at the time it did not touch her deeply.

She moved her head from under his hand, and held up her face to be kissed; but John was too overwrought to notice this.

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"You are very good to me, father," she said—"very, very kind; but are you vexed about this?"

John turned away.

"That's nut t' word, lass; tell mey yu luves t' squire better dhen fayther, ur mother, ur George, an' Ah'll gi' yu tiv him; thof yu hev known him bud three ur four weeks," he added sadly.

This was the first glimmer that had come to Doris of her father's power to forbid her marriage, and her sense of justice rose against what seemed to her to be tyranny. She forgot her father's sorrow.

"I cannot marry against your wish; but I think Mr. Burneston will make me very happy," she said quietly, but with a coldness that struck him like a knife; "and if you wish for my happiness, father, you had better let us marry."

He was still turned away from her; she could not see the anguish in his eyes, the rigid pressure of his lips one against another, the clasp of his strong hand, and yet the

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sympathy that had bound this father and daughter so firmly together had not quite lost its power in Doris's own heart; something warned her that her father's silence was unnatural.

She went up to him and laid her hand on his arm.

"Father," she said gently, "tell me; don't you want me to marry Mr. Burneston?"

He turned round quickly, his deep-set eyes lightened down on her from under the heavy red brows, and the light shining through his hair and whiskers seemed to circle his head with a glory.

"God help yu, bairn! Yu gaums nowt"—he drew a deep breath. "An' waat fer sud yu? Deead Ah ivver say yu neea, lass? Waat fur sud Ah freeat if yu're happy? 'At's waat Ah's com fer tu mak seear on. Ah'll gang back tu Burneston noo."

Dorothy waited and waited; she did not dare to interrupt the talk between father and daughter. It was a relief when Doris came to find

her, with the tidings that the farmer had gone back to Church Farm.

"And what does father say, Doris?"

"He's very kind," said Doris; but she turned away, and went to her own room, to write to her friend Rika.

Letter from Doris Barugh to Frederika Masham.

"MY DEAR RIKA,

"When I wrote to you a week ago I did not guess at the news I am now going to give you. I have spoken to you of my brother's kind friend, Mr. Burneston. Only yesterday he came here and asked me to be his wife. This will surprise you; but it surprised me,

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too, very much. I believe we are to be married in a few weeks. I wanted you to have come and stayed with us first, but now, perhaps, you will be so very kind as to come and be my bridesmaid—I shall only have one. We are to be married at Burneston Church, and then Mr. Burneston is going to take me to France, and other foreign places. So, dear Rika, if you can come soon, I

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shall be very glad, and then we can have a little time together. Miss Phillimore is to get all my things; but Mr. Burneston does not wish her to be at the wedding; only you and my own people, and his son, perhaps.

"Dear Rika, it is all like a dream, and this is a rambling letter; but I feel so queer and altered that I sometimes doubt if I really am myself, or whether Dame Wrigley has not bewitched me as well as the cows.

"It is not all happiness. It is very sad to see my dear father; I have only seen him once since, and he cannot bear to give me up. I did not guess he was so fond of me, and I fear we shall meet so seldom—I do not like to think of this. He is going to leave Burneston almost directly. I have told you that is the place where we really live. This is merely a temporary house, and I believe my father is looking after a farm somewhere on the moors; but I suppose gain in life must always bring loss of some kind with it, and I am sure of being satisfied with my new life. Do come as soon as you can; I have

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so much to talk to you about, and believe me,

"Your afffectionate friend,

"DORIS BARUGH."

In a few days came Miss Masham's answer.

From Frederika Masham to Doris Barugh.

"I am so glad, but I never was so surprised, to think of Doris, that chilly lily which turned up its lovely nose at 'love nonsense' generally, having actually condescended to tell a man she will marry him! After this, if clouds fall and pigs whistle, I shall be calm and unsurprised. And the squire is the man—that grand Mr. Burneston, of Burneston Hall! Oh, my Doris! hast thou, then, been a princess in disguise, a goose girl, who is now restored to her rightful rights?

"Will I be your bridesmaid? I should rather think I would. I am in a perfect whirl of excitement, to think of seeing you and that darling of a poor George so soon, and the new

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husband—oh! I beg pardon, I mean lover. Only I am frightfully angry with you. You never even tell me his Christian name; you never say 'darling Jack' or Tom, or Harry—just 'Mr. Burneston,' quite calmly, as if he were your grandfather. Is he much older than you, Doris, my love? Well, you have such a steady little head that you will want a husband older than yourself, and I think it must be much nicer. How wonderfully good and unselfish you are! Now if I loved anyone, I should rave about him, because I should be able to think and talk of no one else. Still you might have given me a glimpse of the creature, just to let me see if I had the least chance of tormenting him. What a stiff, proper letter I am writing! I believe I have a vague fear that darling B. (perhaps his name is Benjamin—only think of my Doris turning into Mrs. B. B.!) looks over your shoulder while you read. Now don't let him see this, and I'll tell you what happened when I read your letter.

"It was breakfast-time, and I went quite off. I jumped up, clapped my hands, and cried out.

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'Hurrah—hurrah—hurrah!' and all the boys followed suit, they always do, you know; they say I waved my cup round my head, and little Jemmy said, 'Is de house on fire?' and papa put on his spectacles and looked at me in a comic way he has sometimes.

" 'Anything very special, Frederika?' he said.

"I sat down: 'Doris is going to be married, papa, and you must excuse everything;' so you see you are responsible for my behaviour. I suppose, as the wedding is so quiet, a plain gown, &c., will do best, but mamma will see to all that, she is so good. You can say, if you like, how you wish me to be dressed. I am actually bursting till I get to Steersley—how we will talk! George won't mind, I suppose. With fondest wishes for your happiness, your own

"RIKA."

"Where is George, mother?" Doris looked up from her letter. "I haven't seen him this morning, and I want to tell him Rika is coming."

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"He's gone to breakfast with the rector, my dear—he and Mr. Hawnby seem main fond o' one another—he's a nice old gentleman, Doris. He's a much better parson than Mr. Spencer is, I know that. I wish he was the parson to marry you."

"Do you?" said the girl, absently, "is not one clergyman the same as another? We could certainly have been married here, but Mr. Burneston does not wish it."

"Of course not; why, my dear, it would never have done: it would have looked so bad; it would have seemed as if he was ashamed of what he was doing, and of you too." Doris blushed with vexation. "If you had never lived at Church Farm, it would have been

different. My word, child, Mrs. Emmett's face will be a sight to see, and Rose, too. I wonder what they're saying about it all. I'd like to know, rarely. Eh! Mr. Burneston 'll have to get a new housekeeper."

Mrs. Barugh checked herself and gave a little frightened look at her daughter's vexed face.

"Please don't talk so, mother, I don't

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like to see you proud of what is a trouble to me."

"A trouble! what do you mean, child? your marriage with the squire a trouble! My word, you're talking nonsense, Doris."

"No, mother, I'm sure I'm right, and father thinks so too, I know, though he's sorry to lose me. I am glad to marry Mr. Burneston, and proud, too, that he should wish to marry me, and I like him; but I am troubled. I mean because this marriage will make some people vexed and unhappy, and that is why I wanted less haste about it."

Mrs. Barugh always got fretted in an argument with her calm, clever daughter. Doris was sure to get the best of it, and was, her mother knew, usually right. But she had some strange crotchets, Dorothy thought, and, with all her loftiness, in some ways a great want of proper pride.

"Gracious me! That's what I call folly, child. Why ever should you and Mr. Burneston dilly-dally over your happiness, just because a strong-willed, selfish boy of fifteen chooses to

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object? for I'll lay that's what your 'some people' means."

Doris frowned yet more decidedly, and pressed her lips together to control her vexation.

"Please don't say 'I'll lay' mother, and I don't think you are quite fair to Ralph Burneston. Suppose father were left alone, don't you think George would be vexed if he wanted to marry a girl out of the village?"

Mrs. Barugh had seized a lilac cap-string with each hand while her daughter spoke, and she held them at some distance apart while she answered—

"My goodness, Doris, you do say the oddest things. Fancy your comparing your brother George with that self-willed, giving-himself-airs young Ralph Burneston, and then to liken yourself to Rose Duncombe or one of these Steersley lasses! You quite take my breath away, and that's a fact. Mr. Burneston knows what he's about, and he's in the right to pay no heed to his son's objections, that's to say if the lad really does object, which I don't believe, for I can't see the reason why he should."

"Well, mother, how about George? Is he self-willed and selfish?"

Doris looked half archly, half sadly at her mother, and Mrs. Barugh's delicate face puckered and quivered. It was as much as she could do not to cry at the remembrance of what had followed Mr. Burneston's proposal. In the very moment of her triumph, when Mr. Burneston had come into the kitchen after her, and had shaken her by both hands in the fulness of his joy, and thanked her for giving him such a treasure, in that sublimest moment of her life, when everything looked radiant with glory, George had suddenly come to her, as she stood, a moment before she sought Doris, looking after the squire as he rode away.

"Mother," the lad spoke in bitter sorrow, "don't look for joy or blessin' in this matter, gude will not come on it—only sorrow."

"Hush, George," she had said, "oh, fie for shame!" But the lad had retreated to his own room, and next morning had come her husband's rude, strange behaviour. Dorothy had said pettishly to herself—"Not to say one word

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after he had seen Doris, and to go off again without giving any reason, as sulky and dogged as you please. Bother the men, they're all alike."

It was really too bad that neither husband nor son should wish her joy on this great and triumphant event, which she felt she had so largely helped to produce.

But during the afternoon a hamperful of flowers had come for her from Burneston Hall, with a little parcel for Doris, and the setting out her flowers had filled Mrs. Barugh with a happy, fluttered excitement. She was disappointed to find that the parcel only contained a letter and a book, but somehow a throng of busy thoughts and plans, and the golden future shining out more and more distinctly as a background to her daughter's loveliness, had made her shake off these vexations.

And now Doris herself had recalled them. It was too bad; between them they had managed to trouble all her joy.

"I must give George a talking to," she said, in answer to her daughter's question.

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She resented the cold indifference which George had shown, and yet she could not bear to blame him to his sister; come what might, her boy was more to her than Doris ever could be.

Doris smiled, but she felt proud and bitter.

"You had better leave him alone, mother. He thinks I ought to have said 'No.' He has scarcely spoken to me since; so it is plain you and he do not look at this matter from the same point of view."

It was harder than ever her mother thought to blame Doris now that she would so soon be a real lady; not only a lady in her mother's eyes, but an unmistakeable lady in the eyes of the whole world; for Dorothy even then held the creed, so popular nowadays, that a lady is made by the costliness displayed in her dress and her house, her establishment, &c., far more than by her breeding; but her restless nature could not be content without an attempt to justify George.

"Ah, it's all very well for those who have got all they want to take no account of those that haven't, but, Doris, it wouldn't be natural if

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the poor lad wasn't sad; he may not be so much to you, but of course you're a great deal to him; and no girl's the same to her brother after she's married."

"No, I suppose not," said Doris, drily. It seemed to her scarcely possible that George could ever feel himself Mr. Burneston's equal. "But, mother, you mistake if you think I have ever been much to George; he thinks far more of Rose than he does of me."

Mrs. Barugh put her hand up to her forehead. "Oh, dear, why do you put that worry back in my head, child? And when you are gone, there'll be no hindrance; that girl'll be always after him."

"I don't know about that," said Doris, quietly; "at present I think the love is all on George's side."

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CHAPTER VIII. HEART-BURNING

"I CANNOT see it" George was saying, "You may be reeght, sir, but it goes again me to think you are."

The clergyman sat smiling kindly at his young friend. He had just led the way into his library—a favourite haunt of George's, and even now, though at Mr. Hawnby's request the lad sat down, his eyes roved greedily over the brown leather and stone-coloured paper backs of the precious books that covered the walls.

"Well, George, put it in this way; suppose, when you are older, you feel an affection for some young woman not quite of your own level, will you think it right if she gives you

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up because of this? But yours, of course, can hardly be a parallel case to Mr. Burneston's, because your parents have to be considered."

George's fiery redness made the vicar hesitate.

"Yes," the lad said thoughtfully, "when a lad has a father an' mother like mine is, he's bound to study 'em as well as his own likin's, an' maybe it's feelin' that 'at makes me so hard on Doris. If I saw that my marryin' wad gi' father or mother a sore heart, I'd not do't."

"That's well said; but still you forget another point; you say that your sister's affections are not warmly engaged, but you forget Mr. Burneston's feelings. Surely he must love your sister very much indeed."

George struck his fist on the leather-covered table.

"And that's what I cannot make myself believe. He hesn't seen eneaf on her to know if she's fit for him. Maybe he sees 'at this scheealin's played t' mischief wi' her life, an'

he's taken pity on her; if I were seear o' that"—he stood upright, warming with his subject—"if I thought he were takin' her out o' pity, I'd

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nivvers let him "within t' door again. Ah, you looks startled, Mr. Hawnby, an' maybe you thinks I'm a bad brother, but I cannot stan' by an' see my sister married fer charity."

Mr. Hawnby had sat resting his head on his hand; as George spoke he laid his lingers across his own mouth, it was so difficult not to laugh outright at this suggestion.

"No fear of that, my boy," he said kindly; "you must try to remember that your sister is a very beautiful and gifted young woman, and from the little I have seen of her I should say that in outward manner she is very well fitted for her change of position; but though I cannot do as you wish with regard to your mother, I will tell you, because I see that you wish for my real opinion, that, in point of fact, I do entirely disapprove of unequal marriages; they must breed strife somewhere, and they tend to disorder in many ways, and strife and disorder in a family"—he smiled—"are, I suppose, great foes to godliness, eh, George?"

"Oh, sir," George's brown eyes were full of beseeching earnestness, "say all that to mother,

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please do, sir; you hardly know t' good 't would do her. Your sermons have stirred her wonderful; they're another sort to our parson's. I don't mean a word o' blame, sir, again Maister Spencer, but when t' parson's so keen for huntin' an' shootin' an' ferretin' an' t' like, ther's nae use in lookin' for work in his sermons; it seems to me they comes last wi' Maister Spencer."

Mr. Hawnby laughed.

"You young people are very severe critics; you'll be telling me next how long a sermon ought to take to write, eh, George?"

"No, sir"—the lad blushed, but he spoke reverently—"I hope I'll not venture to find fault wi' you—it's for mother's sake I ask you to speak to her; this marriage seems to hev turned her upside down."

"I really cannot interfere," the rector said; "if your father asked me I should hesitate, because there seems no ground to go on, but I tell you again that a brother has no authority whatever; you have really no right to give your opinion."

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"Well, good-bye, sir," George spoke wearily, "it's the first time I ever found I couldn't see things as you do, an' I cannot—an' if I feels a thing's wrang, well then I feels it a duty to say so."

"Good-bye, my boy; I think you are wrong; remember the old saw, 'Least said, soonest mended.' Now I am due at a parish meeting."

George limped home in a discontented mood. His will asserted itself strongly against this marriage, and he had been so accustomed to see his advice taken by both parents that he could scarcely believe they would not end by following it in this instance. His ill-health had kept him so much in-doors that his mother had grown accustomed to consult him on all subjects; her submission to his guidance had hitherto been so implicit that it seemed to him, as he had said to Mr. Hawnby, as if her daughter's engagement had turned her upside down. It was a great pity that the rector refused to interfere.

As he went slowly home he thought over Mr. Hawnby's words.

"If he'd ha' known all," he said sorrowfully.

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"he'd say that there warn't t' reeght feelin's atween Doris an' me. Maybe I'm at fault too; ther mun be two to make a quarrel, an' maybe it'd be reeghter, an' more like a brother's part, to speak out tiv her like a man, isted of hodin' my tongue like a sulky cur. If I could gain Doris, mother wad see it t' same way: as to father, he's crazed about her doin' it."

As he reached the cottage, he saw his sister at the gate. She was dressed for walking, and it seemed to the lad that here was his opportunity made for him.

He nodded to her, and then turned and walked beside her without a word. "I have a letter from Rika," she said; "she says she'll come, George." He made no answer, and she went on beside the beck, and through the white swing-gate, which George held open for her.

They were quite alone here, the hedge on one side screening them from the road, and the high green sloping meadow on the other securing them from any sudden interruption. Doris was annoyed by her brother's silence.

"What's the matter, George?" she said.

"Doris!" he spoke abruptly; "maybe I've

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not been quite as ye might ha' thowt I should ha' bin in all this, an' I'll tell ye t' reason fer't, lass. I cannot speak again my conscience an' say I wishes yey joy when I thinks ye're doing wrang."

"I know you think so, but I cannot help that."

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"You thinks I say this because of the space atween you an' Mr. Burneston, but it is not fer that alone. You do not love t' squire as a lass sud love afore she weds, Doris, an' I'm feared you're only weddin' fer t' sake of bein' a great lady, an' that'll nivvers bring a blessin'."

Doris kept silent, she was angry, but she told herself that in this short time of her home life she ought to be kind to her family.

George was surprised when she looked smilingly at him.

"If I say what I thinks" she laughed, "I should say it is not your business; but I want you to be reasonable, and therefore I will be quite open with you. You are right. I do not love Mr. Burneston"—she blushed till George

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thought her colour was as lovely as Rose's—"as much as I should do if I had known him longer. I was taken by surprise. I should have preferred things to have come more gently and naturally, but I see this would be selfish—at least, Mr. Burneston has made me see it. He says, as father has decided to leave the Church Farm, any delay would be unsettling and unprofitable, and that therefore the sooner we are married the better for father; but, indeed, dear," she said, more warmly, "if you are thinking of my happiness, you need not trouble. I shall be very, very happy."

George was puzzled. Unconsciously, Doris had shielded herself against his arguments, but he had one keen arrow left.

"I do not think of you only; father's main troubled I'm seear; if not, then what fer dizn't he cum ovver? You dizn't ken t' store he sets by you, Doris."

Her eyes glistened, and there were tears on the long, dark eyelashes.

"I think I do," she replied abruptly, "and that is another reason why I wish it were less

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hurried; it seems as if father and I had had so little time together."

"What fer don't you go an' bide wi' 'im at t' farm?" he asked abruptly.

Doris looked troubled.

"One or two things prevent that," she said; "I could not go without mother just now, we have so much to see about together, and it is more convenient in many ways to be here. I hope father will come again soon. I shall write and tell him how much I want him."

"It fair caps mey, it diz," said George emphatically, "I cannot see it plain, you seys you loves father best, you freeats fer his company, an' yet you can leave him for t' rest o' his life fer a husband whilk is a'most a stranger to you."

Doris walked on silently. George's way of putting the question was startling, and carried her on to a side of the future which, in the short time she had had for contemplation, she had not yet seen. As she thought of her father in that brief interview her heart went out after him, and she resolved not only that she would write, but that the warmth of her letter should

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atone for the coldness which she felt she had shown at their last meeting.

Should she come to love Mr. Burneston as well as the tall kind-eyed father who loved her so dearly—the only being who had ever really stirred her heart with warm affection? But the question did not touch her as deeply as it would have touched a different nature, or a mind that had been accustomed to meditate on love.

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Doris had never read novels, and love, on the woman's side at least, did not seem the necessity which it is to some minds even in early childhood. Till her engagement the desire of being loved even had not shaped itself. With Doris there had lain dormant the stronger craving which Mr. Burneston's avowal had awakened, though doubtless this had been roused to semi-consciousness by the homage paid her during school-life.

The glimpse she had now got of the poignant life-long sorrow she was going to cause her father, and also of the wrench the separation—for she was open-eyed to that necessity—must

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cause her, departed again as if she had shut out a cold wintry sky with a glowing curtain on which a blaze of warm light revealed the marvellous hues, and calm came back to her.

"You must not make any mistake," she said, in a firm decided voice that told George their moment of confidence had ended. "I did not say I should not love Mr. Burneston as a wife should her husband. I do not like to own, even to you, that at first it is different, but I want to be quite open with you. As to father, it seems to me that the question lies between ourselves. He would wish me to marry some one some day and to be very happy; so it is chiefly the hurry that really grieves him now, and I must do all I can to make up to him for that. Do not let us quarrel, George." It seemed to her that she should not often again have one of these usually dreaded lectures from her brother, and she resolved to struggle against the hardness his rebukes created in her. "I learned one thing at school that home-life does not teach—people cannot all see things with the same eyes; but it does not follow that those who disagree with us are quite wrong."

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George felt worsted and strangely ungracious.

“Well,” he said, “I give up, yu must ha’ yer will, but I don’t see that yu’re reeght, Doris.”

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CHAPTER IX. THE EVENING BEFORE

PERHAPS, if we all knew how our words and actions affect others, we should become changed beings, always supposing that we have feelings tender enough to care for the pain or pleasure felt by any but ourselves, and yet, perhaps, what is called our well-being and welldoing in life might be seriously hindered if this were our standard of action.

Perhaps if Doris had seen her father read her letter—with hungry eyes, over which presently he drew his broad fingers as if some mist obscured them—perhaps, I say, if she could have seen the smile that lighted up his face—could have known the healing of sorely wounded love that her few loving sentences gave him,

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she might have asked herself whether she should not pause and stay longer with this fond father, while she learned to love the man for whom she was giving him up.

John did not write her an answer. He seldom communed with himself except on farming points; but that night when he went to bed he took down his Bible and read, and then he prayed long and earnestly for strength against himself.

Two days after this he met Mr. Burneston. John was glad that they were beyond the church, and out of the view of either the old sexton or Rose; he shrank from both of

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them, and dreaded the moment when the news should find its way to the village. Both John and the squire were on horseback, the latter was on his way to Steersley.

They had not met since the day of the proposal, and Mr. Burneston was surprised when the farmer reined up his horse and held out his hand.

"Yu mun gi' mah love tu Doris, an' yu can seh, Ah'll bide wi' her fra Saturday till Tuesday,

an' we'll hev a rare walk ur tweea—she an' mey aleean tugither."

"I'll tell her. Any message to Mrs. Barugh?" The squire was pleased that John had grown reconciled.

John looked stern, and shook his head; then, nodding to Mr. Burneston, he rode home. Yes, he would go and see Doris, now that he could tell her he wished her to be happy in her own way, and he hoped Mr. Burneston would take his hint, and leave him alone with his daughter.

The days sped with amazing quickness—days are apt to be winged before a wedding. John Barugh paid more than one visit to Steersley, and each time the squire, prompted by Doris, kept away from the cottage.

But the farmer did not soften towards his wife; indeed, he spoke very little to anyone but Doris.

Two days before the wedding he was to take his last leave of her, but, instead, he hurried to the door, where George stood looking at his father's horse, which a boy had just brought round.

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“Wonnut ye bid them farewell?” the lad said.

“Neea, neea.” John spoke hoarsely. “Whisht, lad,” and he moved quietly along the path, lest the sound of his footsteps should bring Doris to the window.

“Ah wadn’t bring a tear tu her een if Ah cud keep ‘em dry,” he said, as he rode away; he had stifled the longing he felt to hold his darling to his heart, and tell her, even then, that he could not yield her up.

Doris had had one great disappointment. It had been settled that Rika was to arrive a week beforehand; but on the day she was expected came a letter from Mr. Masham, saying that his wife had been taken suddenly ill, and that his daughter could not be spared at present. “If a favourable change takes place, Rika shall go to you,” he said.

Mrs. Barugh had been much discomfited by this. She had engaged a bed for George at the inn, and had spent care and time, which she could ill spare, in the midst of her preparations, in arranging the lad’s own room for the visitor,

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and, besides this, what would Doris do for a bridesmaid?

She looked timidly at her daughter, who sat with troubled face re-readiug the letter.

“I suppose you wouldn’t like me to ask Rose Duncombe?” Dorothy said. “I could see that she was properly dressed, and I know it would please George.”

Doris raised her head haughtily.

“It could not be thought of, mother. I shall have you and my father. It is a pity, of course, but it cannot be helped.”

Still it seemed to depress her, and when Mr. Burneston came, he reproached her for caring more for Rika than for him. "You have grown quite pale about it," he said laughingly, when he bade her good-bye for the last time before his wedding-day.

He was not to go over to Steersley the actual day before the event; he and John Barugh would have business to transact, both respecting the settlement which Mr. Burneston had made on Doris, and also in regard to Church Farm—and Ralph was to arrive at the Hall.

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Only her mother and George saw the sudden pleased surprise in Doris's face when, next morning, a letter came from Rika herself, announcing her arrival for six o'clock that very evening. The letter ended with, "I wish I could fly to you."

The excitement and flurry of Dorothy bewildered both her children, and made George, as he expressed it, "fair fractious."

"Sit ye doon, mother," he said, "you'll worrit Doris past bearin', let alone yersel'; t' room 's fettled, an' you can gi' t' lady summat to her tea, an' what more fuss hev you need for?"

By tea-time Mrs. Barugh had tired herself out, not only by fussing up and down stairs, but by a perpetual flow of unmeaning talk, of which Doris took no notice. It seemed to her that her mother was the only member of her family who really rejoiced at her marriage, and yet she could not feel grateful for this sympathy. She shrank so painfully from the undisguised triumph which her mother felt in her coming elevation.

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George had driven to the station, some miles distant, to fetch Miss Masham, and the mother and daughter sat expecting the visitor.

Doris was dressed as usual in a soft fawncoloured woollen gown, her large falling collar fastened at her throat by a handsome gold brooch—a gift from Mr. Burneston. She wore her soft thick hair smoothly now, though it rippled into exquisite curves on the creamy temples and above the delicate ears; and as she sat thinking, the fine dark brows were closer to her deep sweet eyes; she leaned back in her chair and clasped her hands.

As they lay in her lap, she twisted round and round her finger a splendid diamond ring, also a gift from her lover, and her mother gazed at her admiringly.

"My word, Doris, this white gown will suit you beautifully, and the bonnet's only fit to go under a glass case. Miss Phillimore's got rare good taste."

"I don't know," Doris said languidly; "I think a lace bonnet is rather fine. I should have liked a simpler one. The one I'm to travel in would have done."

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"My dear!"—then seeing a frown gathering, she remembered that, this being the last evening, she was bound not to thwart her daughter. "Only to think," she went on, "that it's scarcely more than two months since George and I were sitting expecting you and father from London. My gracious! it seems nearer a year. It's quite like a fairy tale."

Yes, it was little over two months since her return, and yet Doris seemed to have lived more than one new life in the interval. It was a pleasant distraction to go back to that first arrival, and see how utterly unlooked for had been such a solution of her puzzle about the future. It was a relief from the day's worry to do this, for this day had not been a happy one to Doris.

Her father's abrupt departure had disappointed her. Several words which she had tried to say, and which she had always failed to utter, she felt she could have spoken in a last parting, for she had not fathomed the real reason of his going away.

"Father's like me in some ways," she said; "he hates any nonsense or fuss, and I daresay

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he felt awkward. It is very nice that he's so reconciled to my marriage." And yet there was a sense of weight and depression at the thought that she should not see him again till he stood beside her in church to give her to her husband.

It had been decided by Doris herself that she should not return to Church Farm. John Barugh had engaged the best fly and the best pair of horses that the Black Eagle boasted to convey the party from the cottage to Burneston Church. Mr. Burneston had feared the fatigue of the long drive for Doris, but she had pleaded earnestly for this arrangement. Then Mr. Spencer was to give them lunch at the vicarage, whence the newly-married pair would start for London.

All this had been settled days ago—it was another perplexity that troubled the girl. After the first disappointment about Rika, it had been a relief that her friend was not coming. Doris's independence had been far easier to practise at Pelican House, where her own appearance and her own manners gave

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the lie to any surmises about her origin. It would be different at Steersley beside her father and mother, and in the cheaply-fitted little rooms which the nameless attempts to disguise realities with smart rubbish stamped with vulgarity. For the first few moments the prospect of seeing her friend, of having some one beside her in this trying time to whom she could speak with a certainty of being understood, was inexpressibly grateful,

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and her eyes and cheeks glowed with pleasure as she read out the news. But now she shivered as she sat anticipating the first meeting between Rika and her mother. She knew Rika's keen sense of humour, and she seemed to hear beforehand her mother's elaborate greeting and her apologies for all she had tried so hard to make what she considered as it should be. She was angry with herself for the feeling, but it would come.

Like many another proud nature, Doris shrank keenly from ridicule, and she became unjust to her mother's good qualities in her sensitive dread of her absurdities.

"If Rika had not come now," she repeated

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to herself, "she need never have seen father or mother either."

She had forgotten her visions and hopes about George; but the sound of wheels roused her, and there was her brother at the gate laughing and helping out Rika, with whom he seemed already quite at ease.

About the same time the young squire, as Ralph was called, had reached the Hall.

It was nearly a year since he had been at home, for his father had taken him abroad during his summer holidays, and he had shot up so wonderfully that the servants were astonished at his appearance.

"He's a grown man; he's too awd to hev a yung lass set ower him." Benjamin Hazelgrave had kept "a quiet tongue in his head" since the marriage had been announced, but he could not forbear saying this to his wife.

Mrs. Hazelgrave only shook her head ominously; indeed, so powerful was Mrs. Emmett's influence that you might have thought from the demeanour of the upper household that its head

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was going to assist at a funeral next day; only, as Mr. Burneston had been liberal in gifts of gowns and ribbons and other wedding garments, a certain amount of pleasant anticipation pervaded the servants' hall, which did not reach to the housekeeper's room, and caused much speculation as to the chances of a fine day.

Meantime Mr. Burneston was giving his son an affectionate welcome, which that young gentleman received with careless loftiness.

Ralph had told his father in writing that he considered he was going to do a very foolish thing; and it really seemed to the boy that if his father could bring himself to marry a farmer's daughter he must lose caste by doing so.

At first the young fellow had told Gilbert Raine he should not be present at the wedding; but when his father's summons came he did not feel courageous enough to refuse obedience. There was, too, a certain honour and glory in the idea of being the important person of the day, for it seemed to Ralph that, of course, a farmer's daughter would be extremely

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shy of him, and very desirous of his good opinion.

He was quite as tall as his father now, and singularly like him, only handsomer; his blue eyes were larger and brighter, and his auburn hair clustered round his forehead in crisp waves. He had his mother's delicate features and small chin, but there was about him the graceful dignity and charming frankness of manner which won hearts in his father.

Mr. Burneston's eyes glistened as he looked at his son; he felt proud of him.

“You are growing very fast, Ralph. I suppose you get plenty of exercise with the boats, eh?”

“Oh, yes, as much as I want.” Ralph stretched out his legs. “I’m rather a swell oar now, though I haven’t done much lately, it was too much fag in hot weather. Where are you going—on the Continent, father?” he added, in a patronising tone.

Mr. Burneston winced and was amused both at once; but he felt very much for the boy, and considered that allowance must be made for him.

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“To Paris first, I think, and then to the Tyrol, which”—here he hesitated for a name, and then added—“my future wife particularly wishes to see.”

“Ah,” said Ralph languidly, as if to express, “Pray don’t suppose I take the slightest interest in that individual.”

Before dinner was well over, Mr. Burneston was wanted for various matters, and soon after Ralph proposed a game at billiards, and there was no more talk of the morrow’s business between the father and son that evening

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CHAPTER X. THE WEDDING DAY

ALL the fears and prognostications about colds, and all the preparations in the way of wraps, had been thrown away.

This October morning was as full of genial warmth and of bright sunshine as it could well be, spite of the northern climate.

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"It is a capital thing, Doris darlings it's so warm and beautiful," Rika said at breakfast. "Even you would not look an angel with a red nose, and you will look angelic to-day."

Dorothy was delighted with her visitor, and quite forgot her elaborately prepared speeches in the heartiness of Rika's manner.

They dressed Doris between them, and pronounced

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her perfect, and then arranged themselves.

Mrs. Barugh's costume had been chosen by Miss Phillimore, and she looked so pretty and refined in her soft-coloured lavender bonnet and tulle trimmings that Doris felt rejoiced.

"How very well you look, mother!" she said affectionately.

The tears were in poor Dorothy's eyes as she returned her daughter's kiss.

"I'm so glad. So long as you're not ashamed of your mother, my dear, it's all right," she said, with a simplicity that touched her daughter with remorse.

"Ashamed of you?—oh, mother!" But she flushed deeply as she kissed her again.

She clung to her mother this morning. She felt that she had never loved her so well, and she felt that she had been unjust and exacting.

Real feeling had got uppermost with Mrs. Barugh, and she was too simple and quiet when with her daughter to be ridiculous.

Besides this, Dorothy had found a readily

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amused listener; she got rid of her excitement on Rika.

"I must go and see after Miss Masham, dear," she said. "I promised I'd give her some help, and perhaps she'll want a finishing touch."

But Rika was quite ready. She wore a dark faded-leaf silk dress and a lemon-coloured drawn crape bonnet, which suited her clear, bright complexion.

"My word! you do look nice, Miss Masham; I'm sure you do! But if I may put a pin"—careful Dorothy's neat eyes saw at once that the round cape reaching to the waist, which finished the dress, hung a quarter of an inch lower on one side than on the other—"how do you think I look? Doris is quite pleased with me," turning and arranging herself as she spoke—"I'm that nervous, Miss Masham, you might blow me over. You see, it's *such* an event; and that old goose of a clerk—ah, you don't know him, but it's Joseph Sunley, you'll see him by-and-by—what *do* you think he's been and told my husband?—why, actually he says the proper thing for the bride's father is a large white flower

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in his coat—and he's going to get him a white dahlia. If you'll believe me, Miss Masham, I made Mr. Barugh a proper favour of white satin ribbon—lovely London ribbon. I feel ready to faint at the notion of seeing John coming up the aisle in a white dahlia. It's well and good for horses' ears; but the bride's father, more especially a fine man like my husband, should not be decorated like a—a quadruped."

She wiped her eyes, for she was really crying with vexation.

"Never mind," said Rika, with a hearty laugh, "I know what Mr. Barugh looks like, and I don't think even a white dahlia can spoil him."

"You're very kind, my dear, but still," she bridled, "Mr. Burneston's father-in-law should be very careful of the figure he makes."

But there was no more time for talking. First a cart had to be despatched to the vicarage with Doris's luggage, and then the bride had to be carefully stowed away in the fly from the Black Eagle amid a crowd of gaping Steersley folk. Mrs. Byland was not there; she had prevailed on her husband to

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drive her over to Burneston an hour ago, and she was now standing amid a throng, consisting of all the population that could leave their houses, awaiting the "weddingers."

In front of the porch, in a new hat, a chocolate-coloured coat and brass buttons, and pale salmon-coloured trousers, stood Joseph Sunley, an enormous white dahlia fixed on the lappel of his coat.

Many earnest petitions, and many sugared whispered entreaties, had been addressed to him, and had been alike refused. "Ah mun steek t' door whiles t' bride hes comed," was his constant answer. No one but himself knew that very early that morning he had let in one pretty though stormy-faced damsel filled with envy and anger and others of the seven deadly sins, and had carefully ensconced the said damsel, yclept Rose Buncombe, in a corner where, if she kept still, she was safe not to be seen.

There was plenty of joking among the expectant crowd, somewhat kept in check by the presence of a group at the churchyard gate—a

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group headed by Mrs. Emmett and Mr. and Mrs. Hazelgrave, who stood waiting their master's arrival with the intention of following close on his heels down the gravelled path leading to the old gabled porch. At length there was a murmur, first low, then increasing, and then ended in a note of decided disapprobation.

"Zoonds!" "Zookerins!" "Massy!" "Zolch!" "Dash mey!" from Ephraim Crewe, and other expressive forms of wonder and blame from other bystanders.

"Dhey've ganged thra t' lahtle door!" and a groan succeeded. Then there came a gloomy silence.

It was plainly thought that the squire feared to face his people. But in another minute there rose a loud hurrah! so boisterous and prolonged, that it might have been heard at. the Hall itself, only that the Hall had been entirely deserted, and left to the charge of Ephraim Crewe's grandmother, a deaf, decrepit old woman.

First a rumour had spread that the vicar,

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Mr. Burneston, and John Barugh had come into the churchyard by the vicarage gate in the corner of the glebe field, and had gone into church through the little vestry door.

The next moment, the tall, stalwart, redwhiskered man and the slenderer squire turned the corner by the tower, and came in full view of the crowded rows on each side of the gravel walk leading from the gate to the old gabled porch. John Barugh's pale grey trousers, buff satin waistcoat, and an enormous white flower in his coat, gave him a sufficiently bridal appearance.

A passage was cleared for them to pass into the porch, while the cheers continued lustily. The squire responded to these welcomes by several smiling bows, while the tall farmer looked on with a grim smile.

"His missis hes rigged him oot as fahne as a fiddle," Hezekiah Byland whispered to his wife.

"Whisht, Hezekiah!" Peggy, resplendent in a blue bonnet and a scarlet shawl, her cheeks vying with the shawl in colour, nudged

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him with her elbow, and glanced at Mrs. Emmett, who stood in sullen silence beside the gate. There was an ominous frown on the housekeeper's face. This unceremonious arrival of the bridegroom had completely upset her programme; it seemed to her that the first blow had been already struck at her authority.

Murmurs spread along the closely-ranged rows of expectants.

"Sheea taks her ain tahme!"

"Sheea bides ower lang!"

"Woonkers! Sheea's deein' t' laady aforehand!"

Even Joseph Sunley muttered to himself, "Sheea'll nivvers keep 'im waitin'."

"Bon it! Sheea bides ower lang" said Ephraim Crewe, a sworn adherent of the housekeeper's; "bud dhey'll be as prood as awd Soss is o' his teeal."

Another burst of cheering brought John Barugh and the squire to the church door again; the crowd round the gate swayed, and then opened, and a tall, slim youth walked down the gravel path, bowing to the villagers, first on

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one side, then on the other, with a gracious sweetness which made his striking likeness to his father yet more apparent,

"Hurrah fer t' yung squire!" sounded lustily from the crowd, and then Ralph Burneston also disappeared into the church.

"It's hard on t' poor lad, t' varra pictur' o' his fayther." This was said by Mrs. Crewe, senior, also resplendent in a scarlet shawl. She wore on her head a large Tuscan straw bonnet, trimmed outside with yellow ribbon and a large pink cambric rose, while her rosy face was set off by an abundance of pink satin bows in a blonde cap fastened under her chin.

A thin, sharp-faced woman standing next her looked up at stolid, fleshy Mrs. Crewe.

"Laws, neeaghber," she smiled with some contempt, "wheear's t' use o' makin' mouths at waat's seear an' sartain? Ah knew fewer weeks sin 'at ther war a weddin' i' t' wind. Ah trupped twa tahmes oop stairs, an' Sukey's seen fewer craws ivvery tahme sheea's bin i' t' croft."

Mrs. Crewe was stolid, but she was also

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shrewd, and she eyed her next neighbour with some curiosity. It showed which way the wind blew at the vicarage, she thought, when the parson's housekeeper did not disapprove of this marriage.

"Hev yu seen t' lass, Missis Riccall?" she asked with some scorn.

"Neea, nut Ah! Sheea's bin at t' skeeal at Lunnon ivver sin sheea waz a lahtle lass, afore Ah cam to t' Parsonage; she mun be bonny noo."

"Sheea'll be faded an' set oop lahke her mudher," said Mrs. Crewe; "t' fayther's honest an' plain, an' seea's t' lad; bud Ah cannut 'bide t' mistris. Shu's crammed wiv fads an fancies lahke an owerfed rabbit. An' noo sheea'll be fair brasted wi' prahde."

Mrs. Byland had been listening eagerly to this talk, and she would have joined in at once, but Hezekiah kept her hand tightly tucked under his arm; he did not want his wife

to attract the notice of his elderly cousin. But now he turned to speak to Ephraim Crewe, and Peggy got free and pushed herself close to the two talkers.

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"Ah've seen t' bride" she said with importance. "Mony's t' tahme; eh, but shu's bonny, an' shea's a lady ivvery bit uv her, shea'll mak' a reeght gude missis fer yur maister, thof he's a bit awd fer t' lahkes o' her; if sheea'd waited a while sheea'd hev suited rarely wi' t' yung maister."

Mrs. Crewe raised her head with a look of contemptuous inquiry.

"Eh, bud ye're a stranger, Ah reckons," she said. "Maister Ralph's nut gane sexteen, an' he'll wed wi' a reeal laady, neane o' yur mak'-believes."

This time there was no mistaking the sound of wheels, and the squire and John Barugh both appeared at the church door. They went up to the gate, and the farmer handed out his daughter, and as Doris walked slowly, but with easy dignity beside him, the burst of admiration was irrepressible. The effect on Faith Emmett was almost maddening. Her yellow eyes blazed for an instant, and then she resolutely closed them and shut out the vision of exceeding loveliness which she felt must be all-powerful even before

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the chorus of admiring wonder met her ears.

Poor Dorothy! she need not have spent so much anxious care and pains on her own adornment. Scarcely anyone had time to look at her as she followed on the squire's arm, while George conducted Miss Masham. Every eye was strained for a last look at the fair graceful girl with those liquid far-seeing eyes and a head placed "on her shoolthers," as Benjamin Hazelgrave whispered to his wife, "lahke a queen's."

Faith heard the whisper as she walked into church, and she cursed the marriage with all her heart and soul.

A buzz of admiration went with the crowd as it followed, all but some boys and girls, who took advantage of the general gathering within the building to play hide and seek and leapfrog, and various forbidden games, within the churchyard.

But these pastimes were soon interrupted; first one and then another of the congregation came out into the porch, anxious to secure a place for a good view of the return procession.

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Mrs. Duncombe and Mrs. Crewe found themselves side by side, and the deaf woman's broad unmeaning face was full of delight.

"Eh, neeaghber; wheea can saay t' squire hesn't made a gude choice. Deead yey ivver see i' lahke o' sike a bonny face? My word! sheea is that."

Mrs. Crewe looked down repressively. It behoved the wife of a well-to-do farmer to keep up her dignity with a "puir awd boddy 'at hed just eneaaf to live by."

"Sheea's weel eneeaf, bud looks is nut ivverything. Missis Duncombe, an' fahne feathers maks fahne birds. Yu mun yalays mind at t' Barughs is strangers at Burneston. We kens nowt aboot 'em wersels. Mah lad Ephraim disn't set mich store by t' farmin' 'at gans on yondhur."

Mrs. Crewe nodded her head towards the gabled farmhouse, which showed plainly among the scanty-leaved trees, and then she drew her stiff skirts closer, so as to make room for Ephraim, who just then issued from the porch. The deaf woman only caught a word here and

there, but she nodded and winked as though she understood all that was said. Here Joseph Sunley came out hastily, and began to clear a free passage.

"Gan aweays, yeh lahtle ragils, Ah'll nut ha' yu rampin' an' reein' hereaboots whiles t' squire an' his laady cooms oop t' walk."

As he spoke the congregation poured suddenly out of church, having been taken by surprise by the quick proceedings in the vestry; and before the two rows had again arranged themselves between the porch and the gate, appeared Mr. Burneston and his bride. She looked far more beautiful now, there was a slight flush on her cheeks, and a calm bright look which spoke of secure peace

Faith Emmett, Mrs. Crewe, and a few of their cronies sneered inwardly or muttered depreciation, but the village as a whole was taken by a *coup-de-main*, and there rose up a deafening cheer. Even Ephraim forgot his allegiance to the housekeeper as he turned a glowing face to his mother.

"Hey, marry! sheea's a beauty, an' sheea gangs lahke a queen."

Even Mrs. Barugh's bonnet and general appearance met with favour, and the cheers continued as the procession returned to the gate in the same order, except that Ralph Burneston stepped quietly before George and offered his arm to Rika Masham.

The bells pealed out merrily as the Hall carriage, with Mr. Burneston and Doris, drove rapidly away to the vicarage.

About an hour later the throng had reassembled at the vicarage gates to see the departure of the newly-married pair. On the previous day Mr. Sunley and Will Slater, or

Slaater, as he called himself, the gardener at the Hall, had had a consultation, and it had been decided that the path leading to the carriage should be strown with flowers.

"An' wey'll hev yer lahtle lass Mary Anne Slaater," Sunley had said, "an' mah ain gran'-dowter Prudence; they twae sal stan' again t' gatepost an' fling t' blossoms efter whiles dhey ride away."

And now Will Slater was diligently strowing

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the gravel with white dahlias and chrysanthemums, Joseph Sunley standing over him and pompously advising him now and then.

"Noo gang tu t' gate, honies," he said to the two pretty children who stood shyly eager beside him, each with a basket of flowers, "an' fling 'em wiv a will."

Another burst of cheering announced that Mr. and Mrs. Burneston had appeared at the gate, and as the squire, after putting his wife in the carriage, turned round to speak a hearty farewell, the little lasses, true to their instructions, sent a couple of dahlias at him with such determined good-will that, if he had not ducked his head, they would have hit him hard in the face.

There was a burst of hearty laughter, and the two pretty little maids looked shame-faced and discomfited till Mr. Burneston stooped down, and, patting them on the cheek while he picked up the flowers, said he would give them to Mrs. Burneston as a keepsake.

While the rest of the party were still looking

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after the carriage, Ralph turned to Rika Masham, to whom he had talked exclusively during the wedding breakfast.

“I say, Miss Masham, do you know who that very pretty girl is who stood peeping over the edge of a pew near the vestry? I have been looking at every face in the crowd, but I can’t find hers anywhere.”

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BOOK III. MARRIAGE

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CHAPTER I. COMING HOME

THE church bells had been ringing ever since early morning, except when the ringers assembled round Joseph Sunley’s door for the bowls of crowdy he was wont to provide on such occasions. And judging by the red fingers that held the brown bowls, and the purple cheeks and noses, and screwed-up eyes that bent over them, steaming crowdy was not a bad sort of refreshment on this keen, crisp January morning.

“Timothy’s whiskers is frozzen this mornin,” said Jeremiah Howden with a grin.

The old sexton shivered, but he waved his hand in a superior fashion; he could not condescend to feel chilly before his satellites. Two

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of them, Reuben Crofts and Timothy Tyzack, were older than Sunley was, while Jeremiah Howden was much younger, and Lot Groves was a lad, Mr. Sunley's own deputy in the churchyard.

"Ah's thinkin', lads, 'at yu can clear off fer an hour ur twae. Lot an' me's gitten bizniss 'at cannot be set asahde; if yer nobbut ringin' by fower ur sae, it'll be reeght eneeaf." He shook his head dolorously. "Eh, eh! it's sair 'at it sud happen 'at t' awd witch sud dee 'at t' wrang tahme—mebbe it's a warnin'; bud it's nae faut bud t' squire's ain fer comin' yam a day ower seean."

Timothy laughed, and spat, and moved his head uneasily.

"Weel, Maister Sunley," he said in a feeble flute-like voice, "ye've t' ordherin' o't, sae it rests on yur awn shoothers, bud Ah minds when t' squire's mudher waar browght yam t' bells nivver stopped fra morn till e'en. Eh! that wur a bonny yam-comin'. Theer wur a bon-fire an' a barril o' yell ootsahde t' gates. Hey, hey, that war some'at 'at bides thinkin' on."

"Aye, marry, bud theer's chaange iv ivverything,

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neeaghbur. Zoonds, lad, t' warld winnot stan' still whiles yey leeaks at yursel'; gang yer weays, an' when mey an' Lot hes dean wark yey sal hev yur will wi' t' bells; 'twad be ill wark diggin' 't awd witch's pit-hole just as t' squire an' 'is mistris ganged ridin' by"

"Ah minds,"—began Timothy with his withered old face on one side, and a twinkle in his watery grey eyes; but Joseph Sunley spread out his hand imperatively.

"Whisht, whisht, lad! we've nae tahme fer cracks tu-day," he said, "Lot an' mey hes a stiff bit o' wark tu be gittin' deean wi'."

Reuben and Jeremiah set down their bowls within the cottage and departed more quickly than might have been expected from their slouching figures and slow movements; but Timothy lingered, and then he set down his bowl on the end of Joseph's bench, and fumbled in his grey smock for something which eventually revealed itself in the shape of a horse-shoe.

Leaning on his stick, he bent stiffly towards the sexton and held out the rusty treasure.

"Yi's gitten a crazzler oop dhis tahme.

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neeaghber;" then his treble sank into a whisper, to the offence of Lot Groves, who, being eighteen or so, considered himself old enough to be taken into confidence on anything, especially anything respecting his work, which he conceived the term "crazzler" referred to.

Timothy went on impressively, "An' if Ah wint diggin' o' t' hole fer an awd divvil-dam lahke yon, an' bided sae nagh t' kirk-geeate," he looked over each shoulder fearfully, "Ah'd neal 'im oop o' t' deear sill. Ah seed 'im liggin i' t' rooad, an' Ah sez, 'Ah'll gi' 'im tu Maister Sunley, Ah wilz;' an' Ah picks' im oop, an' Ah've brout 'im. Ah seayd Ah waad, an' Ah did." He held out the horse-shoe and shook his head warningly.

Joseph Sunley's queer twisted mouth curled into a sneer; he smiled pityingly at the old man's outstretched hand and put both his own hands in his pockets.

"Posh!" Then seeing the crestfallen look on old Tyzack's face, "Theer, theer, Timothy! Thoo meeans weel, Ah knaws, bud thoo gaums nowt,—gang awa', bairn," he said, as the half-offended, half-frightened old man turned away,

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and began feebly to bobble down hill. "Noo, Lot," Sunley said sharply, "let's be gangin'; t' awd hoit's geean aof i' a hunch; noo yee git tu wark wiv a will, yu munnut longe onny mair."

Lot departed to fetch his mattock and spade, while Joseph carefully washed and put away the crowdy-bowls. Then he crossed over to the churchyard, and stood beside the spot which he had chosen for poor old Prudence Wrigley's grave. It was an eerie dark corner in an angle of the ground beneath a withered brown firtree; no other grave was near it, and Joseph congratulated himself on his choice.

"Noo then," he called out as Lot came in sight with his implements, "Thoo mun dig, lad, as if awd Soss war waitin'—an' wha kens bud he isn't?—an' we'll pit her far doon, an' thoo mun be seear tu lig t' eearth heavy on her tu morn. Woonkers! we'll keep her quiet atween us," he added vindictively; "gin t' parson wad ha' bin guided sheea'd nut ha' bin liggin' i' t' kirk-geeate, bud at t' cross rooads."

Lot made no answer; he was digging fast;

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but there was a sour discontented look on his face.

"Gin Ah'd a-knawn t' wark yu waar set on, Maister Sunley," he said, when he left off for a moment to scratch his curly red head, "Ah'd nut ha' stayed i' Burneston tu-daay. Gin yu knew sae mich aboot yon awd lass as Ah knaws, ye'd nut ha' ligged her sae nagh yursel, yu'd titter tak a teead by t' feeace."

Joseph's chin was jerked up at this insinuation.

"Mind thoo thy diggin', lad," he said compassionately, "it's mair thy ain wark dhen scheealin' thy betters is."

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Lot looked yet more sullen, but he dug on with stubborn strength that promised soon to complete the trench, flinging up the shovelfuls of rich brown earth with wonderful rapidity.

Joseph pottered about, giving directions to the digger from time to time. He turned away when he heard the click of the churchyard gate, and peering under his crooked fingers he saw Rose Duncombe coming up towards the porch.

Sunley moved stiffly towards her, and Rose,

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seeing him, left the path and came down to meet him between the graves with their green sods and mouldering mossed headstones. She had been away ever since the wedding, minding the younger brothers and sisters of one of her rich schoolfellows, while their governess was absent for ill health. The change of air and scene had made Rose, Joseph thought, "bonnier" than ever, and yet she looked cross and discontented this morning.

"Weel, lass," he said, "an' hoo ha' yu sped wi' t' scheealin'?"

"I hate it," she said pettishly, "an' I won't do no more on't; to be found fault wi', an' lectured, an' spied on. My word, Mr. Sunley, I might as well have been one o' them American niggers." Sunley shook his head, and she went on more blithely. "But, Mr. Sunley, I want to know if the young squire's coming home wi' t' others. Gran'mother 's deaf as t' door, an' she says she knows nowt."

"Sheea's varra reeght, varra reeght. lass. Maist on yu wimin diz knaw nowt, but hardlys yan amang yu'll awn till 't. Iz t' yung squire

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comin' yam, seys yu—neea, t' yung un bides at scheeal;" then looking sharply at her clouded face, "Bud what fur di' yu ax, mah lass? Yu'll all ha' plenty o' talk aboot t' missis's gowns an' bonnets; zoonds! theer 's nut bin sike a wonder i' Burneston sin Ah wur born."

Rose shook her shoulder backwards and forwards like a pettish child.

"My word, Maister Sunley, ye're growing old, an' no mistake; d'ye s'pose I haven't seen plenty o' gowns, and bonnets too, as fine as Doris's will be?"

Joseph shook his head with marked disapproval.

"Whisht, lass!" he waved his hand with authority. "Yu mun think what yu pleease, bud yu mun speeak o' t' squire's missis as ye wad o' onny ither body o' t' qualaty; yu munnut talk o' Doris. Sheea's Mrs. Burneston noo."

"T' quality!" Rose's little impertinent nose turned up with her scorn, and she grew red with anger. "Eh, Maister Sunley, you make a body laugh, ye do. I s'pose ye're glamoured too. I came"—she sank her voice to a whisper.

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for she saw that the red head appearing above the edge of the newly-dug grave was turned in a listening attitude—"to give you a warning,"

The sexton laughed; he looked sideways at Rose.

"Coom, coom, lass, yu wants tu scheeal mey, di' yu?"

"Yes, I do," she said, gravely; "gran'mother an' me's both of one mind about this. Ye've no right to lay that wretched old woman so near us; an' if half's true that's said, I wonder you're not afraid yourself. I don't believe such stupid tales, but I reckon you do, Mr. Sunley."

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He looked at her full of stern rebuke.

"Ye're fond, lass; yu sud read yur Bible. Did yey ivvers hear tell o' t' witch o' Endor? Bud t' liggin her in t' kirk-geeates's naane o' mah wark;" he shook his fingers; " 'twaaz t' parson's sel'."

Lot Groves had an unbounded though sheepish admiration for Rose, and the present was such an opportunity for taking his fill of gazing unseen that he stood in the grave, spade in hand, eyes and mouth opened roundly.

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"Well," said Rose carelessly, "after all, you may be right, but I don't see why a woman is to be called a witch—"

"Whisht, bairn, whisht!" from Sunley, but she went on as if he had not spoken.

—"Just because she's old and ugly; it seems to me young an' good-looking ones may be witches. Maybe the squire's as much 'witched as Mr. Barugh's cows were. Ye needn't glower at me, gaffer, I means what I says."

"Dhen yu mun keep a quiet tongue i' yur heead, ye dotteril," he said angrily, catching her by the arm; "gin Ah war tu seay tu t' squire hawf waat ye've bin sayin', he'd hev ye an' yur gran'mother sent awa adrift afore t' morn. Zoonds! ye've putten mey i' sik a stuffle Ah can hardlys speeak."

He stood trembling with the excitement of his anger at Rose's insinuation. In these three months his first righteous indignation against the squire's marriage had softened, and to-day, in the preparation for the welcome home, he had almost forgotten that Mrs. Burneston had been Doris Barugh. Rose's insolence, as he

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considered it, was just enough to confirm his growing toleration of the squire's choice.

Rose was also in a towering rage. "Old Sunley," as she called him, had always been considered by her as her especial ally, and while the Barughs lived at Church Farm he had always been ready to find fault with one or another of them, above all with the folly of John Barugh in sending his daughter to a London school. It was not to be endured, she thought, that the old fool should turn round upon her in this way, and she went on towards the grave and Lot Groves.

"How d'you find yurself, Lot?" she said condescendingly, at which Lot nodded loutishly and muttered an unintelligible answer. "I wonder at you, Lot Groves," Rose went on; "I wouldn't be mixed up in such a job. That poor old Prudence won't thank them who help to put her underground; she'd liefer be left above."

"Eh, lass, mebbe ye're reeght!" Lot scratched his head by way of brightening his ideas. "Ah deeant cotton tu t' job. Gin you nobbut

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knew what Ah knaws!" As Joseph turned round and came towards them, Lot fell to "vigorous digging.

"Coom, coom, lass" the old man said, "dunnut yu get clavering wi' t' lad tu set him landerin' aweays his tahme."

Rose tossed her head.

"I'm going," she said; "though it's barely civil to turn me out o' t' graveyard. But, Maister Sunley, I want to know what Lot knows about Dame Wrigley. As she's to lie so near us, I have a right to know what she really did. Tell it out, Lot, directly, ther's a good lad."

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She placed herself between him and the sexton, smiling down at the awkward rustic with such winning sweetness that for the minute Lot forgot the risk of one of Joe Sunley's lectures in such a glimpse of Paradise.

Lot peered behind her at the sexton. "Yu mun coom nagher, lass," he whispered. "Ah cannut tell 't tu mair nur yan at yance—it's a fearsome tellin'."

Rose went close to the edge of the grave, but

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Sunley followed and took her arm. "Ah's shamed on yey," he said, "mellin' wiv t' lad. What's cum tiv yu, lass? Gan yam tu yer gran'mother, yu trash!" he muttered between his teeth.

Rose still lingered. She smiled brightly at Lot, and made signs for him to speak; but when she saw him return to his digging, she left with a look of disgust.

"What a poor, mean-spirited hulk the fellow is!" she said. "He should stand by me against that old fool."

She strolled out of the churchyard as lazily as she had come in. She could not enter into the general rejoicings; even for the pleasure of seeing the squire. Her childish worship had been checked by the news of Mr. Burneston's love for Doris; Doris who despised her, and who would set her husband against her.

There was plenty of amusement to be found in Burneston this afternoon. The great gates down at the Hall had stood open all day, and the few small children of the village had slipped in through the stable yard and indulged themselves

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with a survey through the inner gates, also wide open. Some of the more adventurous spirits longed to mount the time-worn steps and penetrate into what might lie within the glass door in the quaint Elizabethan doorway, or adventure themselves among the flowerbeds of the garden beyond the side of the house farthest from the gates; but Mrs. Emmett had managed to inspire these youngsters with as much awe as was felt by their seniors for Prudence Wrigley herself, and not a child dared to trespass within forbidden limits.

But Rose did not trouble herself to go so far as the Hall. There was plenty of preparation to see going on nearer home. The Church Farm really belonged to the vicar, but had been let on a long lease years ago to the squire of Burneston, and now, as the term had nearly expired, Mr. Spencer had announced his intention of farming the property himself, and had offered the large barn beside the rick-yard for the welcome home supper to be given in.

Rose went in through the white gate; but she did not turn aside to the farm-house. A

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labouring man named Shadrach Swaddles and his wife inhabited it now, and it had lost all the trim aspect which Mrs. Barugh's fresh muslin curtains used to give to its windows. But when the girl reached the rick-yard, she stopped. Mr. Spencer and his housekeeper stood beside the barn in earnest talk, and Rose, in her present mood, shrank from all "that lot," as she irreverently called them. Mrs. Riccall, who had been always kind and friendly to her, had so praised the bride on her wedding-day that she was henceforward numbered among Rose's enemies, while Mrs. Emmett, who had snubbed and blamed her for her forward ways in childhood, was now high in the pettish girl's favour, simply because she had looked so sourly at the ceremony.

"I wonder she stays to be at the beck and call of such a mistress; she's got a rare sperrit too. I can't make it out."

Faith had been saying almost the same words to herself all day. Now that the trial drew so near, she wondered why she had stopped to face it. She had written to Ralph and said she

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must leave Burneston even before the wedding—she could not stay to see such a person as Doris Barugh put in his dead mother's place; but Ralph's answer had been peremptory. He bid her not be selfish. "Who," he asked, "would there be to see after me and my comforts if you went away? If I were to be ill, I should like to know who could nurse me. No, Faith; don't you say the least word about leaving, or give any cause of offence to my father's wife, or you'll get the sack at once, you may be sure. She'll be only too glad to have the excuse of packing you off."

And at the time this letter had pacified Faith, and she had reproached herself for thinking of her own feelings and what was due to her when her darling was going to be so ill-used. Yes, she would stay for the sake of her darling boy—for Mrs. Emmett held the opinion that there never had been at Burneston such a housekeeper as she had made. "If I go," she said, "that fond dotteril, Martha Hazelgrave, tak's my place, an' ivverything goes to rewin."

Now that she had seen that all through the

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house was at its best and brightest, and she had dressed herself so as to look her best in a black silk gown (Master Ralph's gift), and a cap trimmed with pink bows, she sat down in her own little snuggery to think. In those few moments it seemed to Faith that she had made a great mistake. All the details of her office—the infinity of little ways in which, if Mrs. Burneston chose, she could mortify and humble the housekeeper—rose

up before her with glaring distinctness. She told herself she was a fool,—and her rage and scorn against the upstart wife coming home to reign in her dead lady's place, burst out in a fierce storm of abuse.

"I can do this," she said, her yellow eyes bright with anger: "t' first tahme she gi'es me a lofty look or word, I goes to t' squire an' says I've bin used to t' quality, an' I cannot bide wiv such as mysel'. Ralph cannot expect t' like fra mey."

She frowned till her dark brows met, and her closely-set teeth and compressed lips made her face even shorter than usual. Gradually the

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woman's strong will curbed the wild beast within, and she smiled in pity at her own folly. Her eyelids drooped till the fierce malicious eyes showed only like two dark curves of lashes, and the thin lips relaxed. What a fool she was to shrink from this raw untaught girl, instead of resolving to be Doris's mistress! "Looks won't do ivverything. She'll hev to larn t' ways o' t' qualaty, an' I knaws 'em; an' he'll see I knaws her mistaks. I'm an awd fool to bother. Me that's bin wiv t' qualaty years an' years, to be feeared on a lass fra a boardin'-school! I mun show her how to guide herself. I munnit let her school mey in nowt."

She acted out her purpose. As the carriage drove up to the door, Faith stood ready in the midst of the hall and greeted her new mistress with a reverent curtsey and a gracious countenance. Doris looked round timidly, but with a bright smile, and Mr. Burneston hurried after her and gave her his arm.

Faith followed them silently upstairs and along the lighted gallery till the squire paused before the door of the rooms which had been furnished

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and decorated for Doris. He led the way through a small sitting-room into the dressing-room beyond.

Then Mrs. Emmett stepped forward and threw open the red baize doors, and then those within, showing a large chamber with a glowing wood fire, and tall wax candles lighted on the dressing-table, in huge candle-sticks shaped like a fluted column mounted on a square of silver steps.

Faith went forward, drew the candles in front of the toilette-glass, and lighted another pair fixed to a tall swing-glass close by; then she came up to Mr. Burneston, who had led Doris to the cosy arm-chair beside the fire.

"Shall I wait on Mrs. Burneston, sir, whiles t' maid hes sorted t' boxes? Maybe Mrs. Burneston's tired."

The squire was pleased. He had been rather anxious about Faith's behaviour, and he had been surprised that after her hostile looks and ways she had shown no inclination to leave the Hall. He nodded pleasantly.

"How are you, Emmett?" he said. Then

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going close up to his wife, "Doris, this is Mrs. Emmett, your housekeeper, a very old and worthy servant of the house. Can she wait on you till Burnell comes?"

Doris had thought, too, about the formidable Mrs. Emmett, and had resolved to see her as little as should be possible. She glanced up at the dark expressive face, but it baffled her scrutiny. Faith's eyes were bent on the ground.

"Thank you, Mrs. Emmett," the girl said, "but I am so chilled that I believe I shall be glad to sit still and warm myself till the maid is ready."

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CHAPTER II. THE NEW MISTRESS AT THE HALL

VERY soon Doris felt that her plans for the improvement of the village girls—those plans so prominent once in her dream of the future—must of necessity be postponed. Her husband carefully avoided any allusion to her former state, and this very avoidance taught Doris that he wished her also to bury it in silence. It was therefore imperative that at first she should keep aloof as much as possible from the villagers.

The first Sunday at church was rather a trial. As she walked up the aisle she felt that every eye was fixed on her. It was comforting to find herself completely screened by the wooden

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walls of the huge square pew at which she had gazed so reverently in former days. She remembered now, with a smile, how she had wondered if the carving on the upper panels of the pew had any hidden meaning in its quaint masks and flowers and other emblems, and whether the cross-legged figure of a man in armour, in a niche in the wall on the right, was an image of one of Mr. Burneston's forefathers. Now that she knew a little more about cross-legged knights, her heart swelled proudly at the thought that she might reckon this unknown warrior among her husband's ancestors, for the Burnestons had been esquires of that ilk from the days of the Conqueror, therefore the cross-legged man in chain-armour must be one of them.

Dreams of the future distracted Doris throughout the service, and she read the tablets with a flush of pride as she thought that one day a record on the old walls would place her name among the ladies of Burneston.

Going out of church, they went through the small door, and then into the glebe-field by Mr.

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Spencer's little gate in the hazel copse, and thus escaped a second ordeal.

Mr. Burneston wished to take Doris through the rickyard, and to the gate where he had first seen her swinging and singing the prophetic jingle; but there were too many spectators just now, and he took the way through the copse gate; he saw that his wife walked on quickly and silently, as if she wanted to avoid notice.

Mr. Spencer had soon overtaken them, panting with haste.

"Good day, good day; very glad to see you home, Mrs. Burneston," he said. "I should have called yesterday, but I thought you would be too busy for visitors. Well, my dear young lady," he added, more familiarly, "I hope you find everything all right. I assure you Mrs. Emmett has been indefatigable. I've no doubt you'll get on very well with her."

He was walking beside Doris. Mr. Burneston had dropped behind, as the path across the field was narrow. She raised her head stiffly, and looked at the vicar gravely.

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"Yes, I fancy Mrs. Emmett is a very good servant," she said.

Mr. Spencer winced. He felt somehow humbled by this fair young creature; but Doris went on courteously,—

"I hope you will come and see us soon. Mr. Burneston has bought several pictures in Italy—I know he wants to show them to you; and we have some fine cameos, and other things worth seeing."

Mr. Burneston came forward, and walked on the grass beside them.

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"Yes, come in now, Spencer," he said; "if you wait till after afternoon service there will be no light to look at pictures by. How does Shadrach manage the farm?"

"Well enough; but his wife is a nuisance. She's a handsome, fresh-faced, golden-haired sloven—she's from the south, you know. I believe it would make poor Mrs. Barugh's hair stand on end to—to—"—here the vicar became conscious and purple-faced; he ended his sentence in a faltering gasp—"I mean the house is so untidy in comparison with what it used to be."

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They had just reached the vicarage, separated from the glebe-field by a narrow holly-hedged road.

"Won't you come on to the Hall?" said the squire.

"No, thank you, Philip," the vicar said, carefully avoiding to look at Doris; "I can't to-day, but I'll look in soon."

This was the first ruffle that had come into Mrs. Burneston's married life.

In travelling they had met with many pleasant strangers, and also with some of her husband's London friends, who knew nothing about the story of his marriage. All these persons had greatly admired Mrs. Burneston, and had at once received her as an equal. She liked her husband more and more as his good qualities revealed themselves, and as she saw his unfailing kindness and ready courtesy, even amid the trials of temper and patience attendant on travelling in days when foreign railways were only beginning; and her own manners had gained much in outward sweetness and gentleness from daily association with him.

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It seemed to her now, as she walked on silently beside her husband to the Hall, that she had received a sadden awakening to the reality of her position, and at the same time she felt a strong dislike to the man who had shown her this reality.

“He is just like that country clergyman we met in Venice,” she thought; “class and good looks are all he thinks necessary for a woman. My education has done nothing for me in his eyes; he would say, if he told the truth, ‘It may have made her fit to teach others, it could never make her fit to marry Philip Burneston.’ Her vexation sank deeper because she kept it entirely to herself, and though her husband noticed her unusual silence, he did not attempt to disturb it. He thought it a fresh charm.

“She is feeling the responsibilities she has undertaken,” the happy man said to himself. “The service has doubtless impressed her, such a mind as hers must digest weighty thoughts seriously.”

Next morning it seemed to Doris that she must begin in earnest her new life. The arrangements

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of her rooms were completed, and Mr. Burneston had taken her all over the house himself. The only part of her little kingdom of which she had not taken formal possession was the garden, and at breakfast she said this to her husband.

“I want to have the garden very pretty,” she went on. “Mrs. Maynard told me at Florence that the most successful gardens are those for which the lady plans the arrangement of her own flower-beds.”

Mr. Burneston laughed.

“Well,” he said, “I suppose you will have your own way with Slater, as you have it with us all. But, I can tell you, he’s not easy to manage, and I’m a good deal afraid of him. I expect you will discover that he has privately a great contempt for the ‘maister’s

nooations.' I have a way of gathering flowers when I want them that seems to annoy him immensely. I got into great trouble with him about the flowers I used to send to you, darling."

Doris laughed.

"I won't gather flowers then," she said. "I'm

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very glad to be guided about Mr. Slater, but I shall try to have my own way with those flower-beds below my side windows. I have an idea about them that I think will be pretty."

"Do just as you like, darling," he said.

Doris found Slater in the vinery, which, with the other greenhouses, was at some distance from the house, near the fruit-garden. His hands were stuffed in his rusty brown pockets, his hat was pushed to the back of his head, and his freckled face and thick red eyebrows were puckered into a highly discontented expression as he surveyed the grapes.

He just nodded in answer to Doris's greeting, but he looked as troubled as before, and his eyes went up again to the black bunches overhead.

"You have a good show of grapes still," said Doris, meaning to be propitiatory.

He grunted, and then glanced at her sideways out of his sly blue eyes.

"Ah'd be mazed if theear waaz a bad show, ov owt 'at Ah's getten tu deea wiv," he said,

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raising his chin still higher; "bud I reckons all t' graapes 'll be needed noo. Tahme waaz dhay'd hing o' ther stalks fra yan year's ind tiv anither, au' thin t' squire 'd seay, ' Gi 'em tu t' bairns, Slaater,' he'd seay, 'gi 'em tu t' bairns.' "

Doris thought the man presuming, but she took no notice.

"I am very fond of flowers," she said with dignity, "and I think those side flower-beds may be made very pretty in summer-time."

Slater's mouth twisted, one corner going up towards his eye, and the other downwards, till it seemed as if it would not come straight again; but he bestowed a bland smile on his new mistress.

"Weel, yu see," he said, "Ah nivvers waits fer summer, missis; mah flooers begins as 'arly as t' weather letz 'em bloa. Wat fur sud Ah wait? Theer's 'nemonies, an' saxifrages, an' sedums, an' semperwivums, an' wall-flooers, an' daffydowndillies, an' white alyssum, an' as monny mair tu mak t' gardin wiv. Yu can hev mignonette an' stocks too agin yu wants chaange," he added condescendingly.

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Doris shook her head. There had been a far more modern and experienced gardener than Slater at Pelican House. Miss Phillimore had taken great pride in her flowers, and Doris meant at least to rival Miss Phillimore.

"Those you have named are all common spring flowers. I want something choice in the summer. I suppose you have some young plants, cuttings from last year, have you not?" she said, as if she knew all about it.

Slater had picked up a bit of straw and was twisting it slowly between his fingers; he stuck out his lower lip.

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"Neea, neea, missis; deean't yey hamper yursel' wi' neah-fangled nooations; dheys yaalus fashous. T' flooers yaalus deeaz reeght weel, an' Ah've a plenty. Noos an' thans Ah chaanges wiv a neeghber's gardiner, Maister Boothroyd's ur Lord Moorside's, bud t' plaant 'at Ah handles iz seear tu thraave, sae dunnut feel parlous aboot t' flooers, yey 've nowt tu deea bud tu gather 'em."

"I don't want to interfere with your gardening"—Mrs. Burneston felt her face flushing—

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"but I wish to choose the colours for these beds. We can use the plants you have," she said gently, "and, Slater, I am very fond of creeping plants; will you plant some against the house? If you will follow me, I will show you where I want them."

The gardener followed her, still pushing out his under lip.

"There," said Doris, "I wish something pretty against that bare wall."

"Weel, weel, missis, Ah'll think it ower, an' Ah'll see whither it can be deean; mebbe it can, an' sae 'at it is sae. Ah reckons 'at Ah'll mak' a better job on't dhen anither wad. D'ye see 'at tree, missis?" He pointed to one of the cedars on the lawn. "Weel, t' squire cums yam, an' seays, seays 'e, 'Slaater, t' leetnin's struck t' cedar, an' it'll dee reeght aweay,' an' Ah jist leeaks an' Ah sehs, 'Deean't ye fash yersel', leeave t' cedar-tree to mey,' an' 'e sehs, 'Tak it tu yursel', Slaater,' 'e sehs. An' Ah jist splices t' tree oop, an' Ah fills oop t' hole wi' yeth, an' Ah nusses t' tree; an' when t' squire cooms yam 'e sehs, 'Wheear, Slaater,' he sehs, 'wheear's t' sick tree?' an' Ah

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laffed o' mey inside, Ah deead, fer 'e cudn't mak' it oot; 'e waaz fair capt, t' squire waaz, tu thenk o' t' tree comin' round. 'Theer's naebody cud ha' din it bud yey, Slaater,' 'e sehs, an' 'e waaz reeght."

Doris smiled.

"It's a fine tree," she said; then, for once unbending from her hatred of vanity, "you were very clever to save it. You'll remember the creepers on that wall, please. Good morning."

Slater had been looking at her almost for the first time fully, and her smile did more in her favour than her words.

"Sheea's bud a lass," he said to himself as his mistress moved slowly and gracefully towards the house; "bud Ah thinks sheea knaws 'er pleace—sheea hes a bonny feeace, an' sheea moves lahke a duchis. If sheea disn't meddle wiv 'em sheea may choose t' flooers noos an' thans, thof them new-fangled nooations plays awd Sobs wi' t' gardins; bud it's t' saame wiv ivverything, t' lasses ur yallus meddlin'."

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CHAPTER III. VISITORS AT THE HALL

AT luncheon her husband said to Doris, "I want to get your father and George over for a few days to see you, my dear. D'ye think your mother will come too if you ask her?"

Doris blushed. She was alone with her husband; but there were feelings in her heart which she could not share with him.

"You are very kind," she said then with hesitation, "I will ask father and George, but I know my mother dislikes to leave home."

This was true, and yet Doris felt as if she had glossed the truth, for of the three she thought that her mother would be the most willing to accept such an invitation, and she

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knew that it would destroy her comfort to have her mother as a visitor at the Hall.

Mr. Burneston felt secretly relieved.

"Very well," he said kindly, "then ask Mr. Barugh and George, and tell them to come soon. I shall be glad of your father's advice on several points, and you must be longing to show my old friend George all the treasures you picked up abroad."

For a moment this speech grated on Doris. Really she shrank from having any of her family at the Hall, but if her husband loved her as dearly as she quite believed he did, why could he not look on her kindred as parts of herself instead of finding reasons for their coming to Burneston? She was too just, however, to cherish such a thought. She had chosen him, and she was happy with him. Moreover, she owed him a debt for having chosen her, and she could pay this debt, which often burdened her pride, pay it fully by sacrificing all she loved to her husband.

She looked up at him with her sweet gracious smile.

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"Thank you, dear. I will write to father and ask him and George to come for a few days."

It is sometimes a curious study to watch the effect produced by two persons of different temperament on the same mind under parallel circumstances.

Years ago, in the early days of his married life, Philip Burneston had sometimes wearied of the petty duties in the way of personal attention which his wife exacted; but he lavished these on Doris; he seemed to anticipate her slightest wish; he loved her with far more strength and fervour than he had ever loved; but much of the cause of this

change in his ways lay in Doris herself. She was not self-helpful. A kind of indolence, fostered by her love of reverie and self-contemplation, made her like to be waited on, although she did not care for being petted; but, spite of this, she was too proud ever to ask for help or seem to exact it. She rarely offered it to others, and therefore she could not ask for it for herself. Now as her husband followed her upstairs into her pretty little sitting-room, and she stood quietly while he drew her chair and

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her Davenport close to the fire, opened her writing-case and placed everything ready for her use,—

"You spoil me, dear," she said, but she smiled gratefully and bent down and kissed him as he stooped over the writing-table. The kiss gave rapture to the lover-like husband, and he thought that no happiness could equal his.

He lingered while she sat down to write. Her regular punctual habits amused him, for school life still clung to Doris. She had no light occupations, none of the ease in getting rid of time without seeming to waste it, which society would have taught her. Already she had planned out the order of her days, and meant to carry into execution her rule of life steadily.

The house bell and the loud chorus of barking announced an arrival before the sound of wheels came crunching over the gravel in front of the entrance door.

"Visitors for you, I fancy," her husband smiled rather mischievously. "Where will you

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see these people, my pet? Hazelgrave will be coming directly to ask you."

Doris did not look frightened or puzzled. She thought a moment, and then she said simply, "I should like to do whatever your mother did, Philip, and I think she would have received her friends in the drawing-room."

She had never once alluded to his first wife. The portrait of her dead mother-in-law hung in her room, a sweet-faced, fair-skinned, timid-looking woman in a large cap. Doris felt a kind of protecting fondness for the original she had created for this portrait.

"Do as you like, darling," her husband said, with a pleased smile, and then having waited while Doris gave the order to the butler, Mr. Burneston took her down-stairs to her visitors, a Mr. and Mrs. Boothroyd.

The husband was ordinary-looking, with a waxen complexion and round dark eyes; he evidently considered these eyes expressive, although they failed to convey to others any idea beyond that of complete self-satisfaction. Mrs. Boothroyd had no doubt been handsome in her

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youth. She was a blonde with thin lips, round which a chronic sarcasm hovered, while her small blue eyes travelled over Doris's dress, taking note of everything.

She talked in a semi-stately way, ending each sentence with a glance at Doris, as if she were teaching; but when her spouse spoke, or rather seemed about to speak, she subsided into silence.

Mr. Boothroyd delivered his sentences with effect, rolling his words as it were round his tongue, while his chest expanded before he propelled them into utterance.

"You have really been such runaways we began to give you up." There was a patronising sweetness in Mrs. Boothroyd's smile that annoyed Doris. "We thought you never were coming home."

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Doris checked the stiffness she felt rising within her, for she saw that her husband was watching her.

"We always meant to stay away three months," she said carelessly. "We thought ourselves rather good to come home so soon.

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We wanted to be in Rome at Easter."

"Ah, just so. Rome is very fair at Easter." Mr. Boothroyd puffed and looked with benignant condescension at Mrs. Burneston; "but really one gets so tired of that sort of thing, aw—you perhaps have never done it; but it's really—aw—always the same, and aw—I found the music and the services, and—and the Eternal City generally, a great bore."

If Mr. Boothroyd had worn moustaches he would certainly have twirled them at the end of his sentence. Not having moustaches to twirl, he stood on the hearth-rug with his legs wider apart than usual.

Doris smiled. "Everything is new to me, so everything amuses me," she said.

Mr. Boothroyd was charmed with her, he liked women to be beautiful, that was a part of their vocation, and perhaps the best part, as in this special quality a woman could really equal a man, and seeing the rare excellence of Mrs. Burneston's beauty, he was far more inclined to excuse his friend's foolish marriage than Mrs. Boothroyd was.

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"You are going to town after Easter, I suppose," the lady said, wondering to herself, meantime, whether Doris had had her gown made in Paris, and feeling that her own handsome clothes were old-fashioned and clumsy in comparison.

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"Oh, no, we shall stay here. I should not care to go away just as the flowers are coming out."

Mrs. Boothroyd's eyebrows rose, and her thin lips pinched into a pitying smile.

"My dear Mrs. Burneston, there are plenty of flowers to be had in London, and besides, you can have them in the autumn. At your age you are courageous to give up balls, and the opera, and the park. Why, Mr. Burneston," she appealed to the squire, who was talking politics with her husband, "surely you mean to have Mrs. Burneston presented on her marriage—it is quite the right thing to do, you know," she looked at him inquiringly, and a tinge of colour came into the squire's face.

"I had not thought of it," he said; "but if my wife wishes it, we can easily go to town.

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At present she has so much to make acquaintance with here that she is quite content to stay at Burneston."

"Yes, yes, I understand, that is a matter of course; but you know duties must have precedence over likings;" this, though spoken in a lower tone, was audible to Doris; "it is naturally all so new to Mrs. Burneston, such a delightful change; but you and I can judge better what she should do than she can." Then she turned quickly to Doris, before Mr. Burneston was ready with an answer. "I shall be glad to be of use to you, my dear," she said with a lofty smile; "if you want advice about housekeeping, or little matters of etiquette, and so on—as no doubt you will—1 shall really take pleasure in being of use; do not hesitate to consult me," she said this heartily.

Mr. Burneston's anger gathered slowly; he bit his lip, but he was silent.

Doris felt and looked angry; but this was lost on Mrs. Boothroyd, bent on fulfilling her self-chosen duty of trying to fit her neighbour's wife for the position to which she had been

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raised. "I can recommend you an excellent maid," she went on, "just the sort of person you want, who will think for you, choose your dresses, and so on."

The immovable silence of her listener here attracted her attention, and she stopped. Mr. Burneston was talking to Mr. Boothroyd, but the stiff tone of Doris's "thank you" reached her husband's ears through Mr. Boothroyd's puffed-out platitudes.

"Thank you, we seem to have a good housekeeper, and I am satisfied with my maid," Doris said; and then she stopped abruptly.

"Yes, all the servants remain," said Mr. Burneston.

Mrs. Boothroyd felt snubbed.

"Poor thing!" she said to herself, "what a terrible want of manner! This must be improved."

"Are you fond of needlework?" she said with a kind smile, that for the moment made Doris feel that she had been uncourteous.

"No, I like books much better."

"Ah, yes; books, my dear, are all very well

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on a wet day, or when one is ill, just to take up and lay down, and so on; but society could not go on if everyone liked reading. Newspapers must be read, of course, but just imagine your house full of visitors and everyone reading books, what would become of conversation? Depend upon it, in your position a love of reading is just the thing you are called on to sacrifice. Berlin wool is far more sociable, and better in every way—

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besides, it is a thing that is done. I assure you I have some damask roses worked on silk canvas, which you will take for real when you see them."

She spoke pityingly, as if she were humouring a spoiled child.

Mr. Boothroyd had been hovering over the two ladies like an amiable vulture, and he now pounced on the opening his wife's pause gave, and seized the conversation.

"Yes, yes, indeed those roses simply lack perfume—that is all—my wife is a wonderful worker—actually she brings her wool-work down to breakfast, and I hear her counting the threads of her canvas while she makes tea

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Aw—a charming song might be written on it. It's a sweetly feminine art, strictly feminine and charming," he looked expressively at Doris. "A woman never seems so much a woman as when she has her needle in her fingers; you—aw—I presume, are gifted in this art."

Doris laughed; she was not sure whether Mr. Boothroyd was quite in earnest.

"No, I am not; and it seems to me that women who give themselves up entirely to fancy work lose time that might be better given to reading and learning."

This retort was too much for Mr. Boothroyd; he puffed, and spluttered, and laughed as if it was an excellent joke.

"Aw—ha—ha—very good; but, my dear Mrs. Burneston, you have left school now, and have done with lesson books. Aw—of what use can learning, or reading either, be to a woman when she marries? Eh, Burneston?"

Doris felt that her face was flushing; she looked appealingly at her husband.

"You don't agree with this, I'm sure," she said.

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Mr. Burneston laughed. He thought Mr. Boothroyd a bore, he mentally called him "a conceited ass," and he was annoyed with Mrs. Boothroyd, but he felt obliged to answer his wife's question.

"Well," he said, "I agree partly with Boothroyd, and partly with you. I think if a lady can amuse herself with a book, so much the better for her; but fancy needlework is, no doubt, a sort of safety-valve against too much learning;" and then, as he really felt no interest in the subject, he proposed to show his friends the pictures and curiosities he had brought from Italy, quite unconscious how much his words had upset Doris.

"A conceited, assumptive young person, that new Mrs. Burneston," Mrs. Boothroyd said sternly, as the carriage drove through the gates.

"My dear, she's lovely enough to excuse anything; and, Barbara, you made a mistake in interfering about dress. Why, Mrs. Burneston is perfect altogether; no alteration could improve her elegance."

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"Pray don't be foolish, Reginald;" his wife had reddened considerably. "You've always got some new beauty to admire, that nothing could improve. I'm tired of such nonsense."

Mr. Burneston did not go back to his wife's room when the visitors had departed, and Doris stood still where they had left her—musing sadly.

"Are they all right in what they say?" she thought. "If they are, my mother and Rose are right, and a woman's life can only be right when it is given up to petty aims and petty occupations."

She pressed her hand tightly against her forehead and stood thinking; the ghosts of her past visions rose up before her with the plans of usefulness she had created. She tapped the floor impatiently with her foot. No, her peculiar position at Burneston crippled these plans; years must pass before she could shake off the memory that attached to her there.

“That patronising, disagreeable woman is right,” she said. “I will go to London, and

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try to learn how a woman can gain such power and influence that all the world looks up to her.”

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CHAPTER IV. AT THE CAIRN

THE new home of the Barughs was far away from Burneston.

John Barugh had found it impossible to get what he wanted near the sea; indeed, he had been too dispirited and sore-hearted to take much interest in this new venture, except so far as regarded the quality of the land; and when he was suddenly offered a small but fertile farm lying chiefly in a valley beside a river, he went to see it, and was satisfied; he made his bargain at once, without any reference to Dorothy, or her comforts and tastes, though the farmhouse belonging was not built beside the river, but on the wild moor above the crags, which

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shut in the valley from a grand range of surrounding hills.

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When first Dorothy heard that the Cairn, as the new farm was called, stood about a thousand feet above the sea, she rejoiced. Next to having sea breezes, she said, it was the best possible thing that could happen for George to live in such pure invigorating air. But when she reached her new home, and saw a long low range of stone buildings, newly slated, with scarcely any tree or garden ground, and all round, as far as her eyes could reach, an expanse of heather-covered moor, she burst into sudden tears, and turned angrily on her husband, who was helping her out of the dog-cart.

"O Lor'! John, what a dreadful place! It's too bad, I declare it is," she said vehemently. "I wouldn't have come if I'd known. Why, I shall be buried alive. I might as well be in the churchyard with my tombstone."

John's heavy eyebrows were frowning, but he looked more grieved than angry,

"It's yer ain wark," he said. "Yu've made yer bed, an' yu mun lig on 't. Yu've ta'en t'

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joy fra uz, noo ivvery pleeace iz t' same athowt t' lass."

This was the first spoken reproach he had addressed to her, and it so soothed Dorothy with a comforting sense of her own superior judgment that she walked silently into her new home. After all, it did not much matter that the situation was lonely; the mother of Mrs. Burneston of Burneston Hall could not have visited the wives of other farmers, supposing that there had been a neighbour or two within reach.

"Gentlefolk's houses are always far apart," said Mrs. Barugh, and she soon settled herself in the new home. "Doris has become a real lady, and her family must rise with her," Dorothy argued; "and, sure enough, she gets all her pretty taking ways from me," said the poor woman, as she looked at herself in the glass. "If a gentleman had come in my way when I was young, who's to say what might have happened?" Here her

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conscience smote her. "God forgive me!" she said; "it's a sin to complain; my man has been a good husband to me—none better."

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On the whole, however, she had a timid shrinking from grand folks, as she called them; she had keenly felt, spite of all, the difference between her daughter's ways and her own.

Doris had written several letters from abroad, but they had not heard tidings of her return home till her letter of invitation arrived.

John read the letter, and then passed it on to his wife; he rested his elbow on the table, and shaded his face with his hand. Dorothy looked annoyed, but she passed the letter on to George without remark; she felt vexed to be left out, but in her heart she was relieved, and thankful that her old-fashioned clothes would not be exposed to the prying eyes of Mrs. Emmett; but she did not intend this thankfulness to be known to her husband and her son.

George read the letter, frowned over it, and then looked at his father.

"Well, father," he said.

"Waats thoo think, lad?" John kept his face shaded by his hand.

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"I's fain Doris has axed yu, father," George said. "She's not forgotten that she's t' same as oursels"

George had not come to the Cairn with his father and mother, he had stayed some time with Mr. Hawnby, who took a warm interest in the lad, and the change had been of

service to him; it seemed as if the stormy cloud of conflicting feelings and opinions which during those two months had brought bitterness and unrest into his peaceful life had cleared away, and left no trace of its visitation except that the depth of George's heart owned a self-knowledge of failings hitherto unexplored, because no temptation had drawn them forth from where they lay coiled like sleeping serpents; he was humbler and gentler than he had been when Doris first arrived at Steersley.

But Dorothy did not understand his meaning. She thought his words presumptuous.

"And that she's not, you foolish lad," she said, with a smile of superior wisdom. "A

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woman takes the rank of her husband when she marries. Doris is not the same as us now, she's every bit the same as Mr. Burneston now she's his wife." She nodded round triumphantly, for her husband had raised his head, and was looking at her from under his thick red brows.

George sat waiting his father's answer, but John first addressed Dorothy.

"Sheea's mah lass, bliss her, an' Ah's fain tu see sheea thinks on uz; but sheea mun coom an' see mey. Ah wunnot bide at t' Hall wiv her."

Dorothy's face flamed with sudden vexation.

"Ah, John, was there ever such a folly! A chance that mayn't come twice in your life, and I've planned out what you're to take and all, and you'll scarcely want a new thing! Why, it's the top-stone on to the family. George, lad, can't you speak? Tell your father not to be such a simpleton. I shan't get over it if he doesn't go, and Doris will be so dreadful disappointed."

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A wistful look crossed John's face at the last words, but it did not dwell there; he laid one broad brown hand on the table, and gave his wife a sad smile.

"Neeah, neeah, Doll. Ah'll nut gang to Burneston."

"Oh! John, you—"

"Whisht! whisht! raah mahnd's sattled, an' yu knaws 'at waat Ah seys Ah means."

George put his hand on his mother's shoulder.

"Father's i' t' right." he said earnestly; "he's thinkin' o' Doris, mother; we'll do well to keep away from t' Hall."

Mrs. Barugh was completely upset, it seemed to her that her cherished projects and schemes were annihilated. Of what use to say that her daughter was Mrs. Burneston of Burneston Hall, if it became known that none of her daughter's family visited her? She broke down in pettish tears, and put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"It's too bad," she said, "but it's what I might have looked for. Oh, John! one would think you hadn't got a soul in your body, let

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alone natural feelings; it's hard enough for me, what neither of you seem to take in, that Doris don't ask her own mother to come and see how she's gettin' on; but it's makin' it worse for me, John, much worse. You know what a comedown I made in marryin' you, and that now you've got a chance of risin' in the world you won't stir a step upwards; I call it downright cruel."

A fresh burst of tears followed.

John gave an impatient groan, and pushed his chair back from the table.

No one spoke for some minutes, and Dorothy sobbed her anger into quietness.

VNiVERSiTAS STVDIi SALAMANTiNi

"Mother," George said lovingly, "it's nat'ral you should wish to know how Doris seems in her new life, an' if father's willin', mebbe he an' I'll go over to Burneston an' just see how she does, an' bring you word. We'll not bide at t' Hall, father."

John raised his head, but there was no sign of yielding in his face.

"Thoo can gang if thoo wilz, lad, bud Ah'll nivvers set feeat i' Burneston Hall. God

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knaws, Ah'd lahke tu sey mah lass, mah wee darlin'," his voice trembled a little; he rose up, a sterner tone came into his voice—"Ah've coom here reeght aweay, an' what fur sud Ah be sik a feeal as to gan' back tu yal 'at Ah meeans tu forgit?"

He passed George on his way to the door, but the lad grasped his arm.

"Bide a bit, father. I wants," he cleared his throat, "I wants to say a word or two to you and mother together: wad ye mind while I'm there if I was to speak to Rose Duncombe an' ask her if some day she'll wed with me?"

He grew deathly pale while he spoke, for he felt intensely anxious as to the result of his question; he kept his large pleading brown eyes fixed on his father, it was his mother's opposition he dreaded.

John gave him back a long steadfast gaze, and then he sighed and looked puzzled.

"Mah lad," he said, "Ah dizzint seea hoo thoo aims tu keep a wife when thoo's gitten her; Rose is a bonny lass, I dean't deny, an' shee 'as bin kahnd tu thoo, an'—"

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But Dorothy broke in here.

"Oh, hush, John! how can George marry Rose? It was different before Doris came home; but don't you see now that it would never do? Fancy a lass like Rose being Mr. Burneston's sister-in-law."

George's pale face flushed deeply red.

"Let father speak, mother; he's none so set-up with having Mr. Burneston for a son-in-law that he would put aside my happiness because of him."

His son's words seemed to give the farmer the clue he wanted, the puzzled look left his eyes, and he looked down gravely, but not unkindly, at Dorothy.

"T' lasses iz aye fond," he said; "big and lahtle's t' same. Thoo seays 'at Ah's nut gude eneeaf fer thoo, an' yit thoo winnot hev t' lad wed wiv a lass 'at can nivvers fling at him 'at he's nut so gude as sheea is; if t' lad mun wed, let him hev a wife 'at cannot cock her neb at him, an' mak' him feel sair at heart." Then to George he said, "If Rose can mak thoo happy, lad, thoo may win her. Thoo'll hev nae needs tu

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wark, thank God, bud thoo's ower yung to wed."

He left the long, low room so abruptly that both Dorothy and George stood still a minute listening to the meaning of his words; then the conscience-stricken woman sank into a chair and put her apron up to her face—she shrank even from her son's eyes.

George waited, but she sat still and silent; her husband's words had torn away the curtain of reserve that had lain between his heart and hers, and she saw the wounds her silly, only half-meant discontent had made. Absorbed in this new thought, she had forgotten all about Rose and George when her son took her hand and spoke.

"You see father is willin'. Mother, say you're willin' too. Rose has a lovin' heart, though she hesn't been taught as well as you hev; but, mother, if you'll only love her, she'll do anything to please you, I know she will."

Mrs. Barugh looked up hastily. All her love for her darling came back in full tide, and she saw with a mother's instinct the danger that

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lay before him. Her heart was so fall just then that she flung her arms round her boy's neck and cried on his shoulder.

"I won't speak against Rose, dear. I don't want to vex you, my boy—I couldn't; but, oh! do be sure she loves you truly, George; don't take her just because she says Yes for the sake of a home and smart clothes."

George held up his head and drew himself away.

"Mother, I'm a poor limpin' lad, but I believe this trouble has been good for me in some ways; it has taught me not to set much store by myself. Maybe Rose'll say No to me, an' if she does, you may rest sure I'll not try to make her say Yes. I want her love as much as I wants hersel'; but, mother, if I thinks she'll say me Nay I'll not ask her—'twad only make soreness atween us."

Dorothy's pride rose at the notion that any Burneston girl could venture to refuse her George, but she did not express it in words. There was just a hope that Rose's manner might be discouraging, and so the evil might be

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staved off for a time. She listened patiently, even complacently, while George explained to her his plan of visiting Doris, and then of seeing Rose and learning his fate.

"I shall go to Steersley an' git a lift next morning over to t' old place," he said. "Mr. Hawnby will always put me up for t' night. Ah, mother, I wish you knew him better; he is so good, an' he is so kind to me."

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CHAPTER V. A REBUFF

MORE than one week passed before George Barugh reached Burneston, for on the day succeeding their conversation a violent snowstorm swept over the moor, and even after its first vehemence had subsided the soft flakes fell thickly and noiselessly till night; and when the farmer looked out of doors in the early morning the broad moor was a trackless plain under the lowering leaden sky.

John would not listen to his son's argument that the horse would surely find its way, and spite of George's impatience he had to wait till the thaw came and the snow melted.

He was very impatient, not to see Doris—he had a half-defined feeling at his heart that he

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and his sister had better now keep apart from any real communion—but he longed to see Rose Duncombe.

On the wedding-day he had felt strangely stirred to make an appeal to her, but he had resolved not to do this unknown to his parents; he was, however, so strongly moved that it was perhaps well for his resolution that Rose remained invisible till he and his mother and Rika went back to Steersley.

VNiVERSiTAS STVDII SALAMANTiNi

Now, as he drove over from the rectory in the early morning with the postman to Burneston, he wondered how he could have waited so long and have thus risked the chance of losing Rose.

Doris had not expected him so early, and she and her husband were out riding when he reached the Hall. He had promised Mr. Hawnby that he would go back to sleep at Steersley, so that he had not many hours to spend in Burneston.

"I'll go up the village," he said to Benjamin Hazelgrave, "but I'll be back soon."

Benjamin looked after him, shrugging his

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shoulders and wondering how it could have come about that such a one as George Barugh should be kin to the lady of Burneston.

The morning was bitterly cold, spite of the recent thaw; but the sun shone overhead, and the birds were chirping as with a consciousness of coming spring, though the trees were black and leafless, and a keen wind made the bare walnut branches rattle as George passed by Ephraim Crewe's farm.

Scarcely anyone came out of doors as the lad passed up the wet, muddy road, and when he reached the two cottages opposite Church Farm, even Joseph Sunley was not in his accustomed place; he had a severe rheumatic twinge in his right arm, and sat indoors crouched over his fire.

George was glad to be able to go without interruption to Mrs. Duncombe's cottage. He knocked and knocked for some time, till at last Rose opened the door herself.

She started at the sight of George, and a flush spread over her face.

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He thought she looked prettier than ever; and she certainly did make a bright picture in the doorway. George grasped her hand eagerly.

"Good gracious, lad"—Rose tossed her head and put up her hand to smooth her hair—"how you frighted me! I was upstairs. Where do ye come from?"

George laughed. "I thought ye'd be surprised, lass. Mayn't I come in?" he asked, for she filled up the doorway with her plump figure and full skirts. "Ye're looking bonnier than ever," he said as she stood aside to let him pass.

"Then it's a wonder, I'm sure it is. Gran'mother's ill an' as deaf as the doorpost, an' I'm run off my legs with this an' that. I'm real tired out, lad, wiv so much work."

"When your gran'mother's better you mun come up to t' Cairn an' see mother." He looked at her shyly, but she remained quite unmoved. "T' air's lovely up at t' moor, an' you can see miles an' miles one hill topping over t' others."

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"My word!" Rose's eyes opened widely, but next minute she said, "Eh, but it must be main dull, I'm thinking, you've nothing but cows an' sheep to see, George."

"If you were there, honey, 't wad be as bright as summer-time. I miss you sorely, Rose."

She saw the look of pleading love in his eyes, but she resolved to seem unconscious.

"George, lad," she said eagerly, "I hevn't seen you since t' weddin'-day. My word, that was a grand day for ye all, specially for Doris. I suppose her head's turned above a bit wiv such an upliftin'. How does she take it, lad?"

George felt vexed; he was not disposed to find fault with Doris, and it seemed to him that Rose spoke unkindly.

"I have not seen her yet," he said, "she and Mr. Burneston were both out when I called just now."

Rose's full lip curled.

"An' do ye really think it? Nay, George, I think ye were hasty to go where mebbe you're

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not wanted. Bless your heart, lad, t' squire won't see you; he desn't mean to take up with such as you."

George had grown scarlet; he felt angry with Rose.

"You're quite mistook, lass," he said hastily; "it may be a lesson to ye not to speak ill o' Doris. She writ father a kind letter, axin' us to go to see her, an' that's one reason why I'm come now."

"D'ye mean to say,"—Rose was staring at him with wide-opened eyes,—"that you're bidin' at t' Hall along with Doris an' t' squire? My mercy, lad, you mun feel like a fish in a croft."

George laughed—his anger against his darling was gone already.

"You're in the right, lass. I shouldn't be mysel' at t' Hall. I'll go an' see Doris, an' tell father an' mother how she looks, an' so on, but I'll not bide long wi' her: our ways lie apart now."

Rose scarcely heard him; she sat thinking, one finger pressed against her red lips; suddenly she roused.

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"George, lad, wad ye find out from Doris when t' young squire's coming home? Mr. Sunley says he believes Master Ralph's said he won't bide wiv a stepmother."

"Sunley's an old gossip. What does he know?" said George angrily. "Why, Doris will make the young lad's home brighter an' more pleasant-like than he's ever known it; he'll be glad enough to come."

" 'Young lad'—I like that!" Rose laughed scornfully. "Why, he's nigh as old as I am, an' he's a man every bit. Did ye ever see such a face? He's as like t' squire as two peas, except that he's twice as handsome. My gracious, George! did ye ever see t' like of him? I made sure he'd come home for Kessamus, an' I think 'twar a real shame o' Doris to stop away, an' leave him to go among his friends. No wonder if he's huffed. But tell me, George, will ye find out, an' write to me when Ralph Burneston comes home again? I'm just curious to know."

George laughed uneasily.

"What can it matter to you, Rose, an' what

for sud he come? There's nowt fer a lad to do now," he said; "t' shootin's past, an' it's a bad season for sport. A young lad's better at school than in sinter-saunterin' wiv nowt to do. Burneston's not a good place for t' lad; there's no mates for t' like o' him here."

Rose tossed her head.

"Ye say that because you've gone now. Suppose he likes lasses instead o' lads; suppose he war to come an' see me? I warrant ye I'd make it lively for him, that wad I." She giggled.

George frowned.

"You're talking like a giglot; I'm shamed on ye, Rose," he said hotly. "You mun mind yersel'; you've no one to mind ye now, an' I's said afore you sudn't garb yersel' so mich as a lass diz waat hes her own mother to guide her."

Rose jumped from her chair, and curtseyed to the ground.

"Well done, parson!" she clapped her hands in mockery; "why don't ye ask yer grand lady sister to get ye made into a parson right

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out, 't wad suit ye rarely, lad, an' then you'd hev a lawful way o' gettin' rid o' yer wisdom, instead o' plaguin' folks lives out wi' lectures. My word, *I'm* shamed on *you*, to think harm o' me for wantin' to talk to Ralph Burneston, a lad not so old as mysel'; you've got a lot o' Puritan stuff out o' that wishy-washy old Pilgrim, ye hev. I'll tell Maister Sunley how rude you've been, that I will." She wiped away some sudden tears with her fingers.

George sat confounded by her outburst; then sudden remorse seized on him. What a fool he had been to put such an idea into Rose's innocent mind!

"There, there, honey!" he tried to take her hand, but she flounced away and stood with her back towards him, trembling with passion. "I *am* sham'd o' mesel', but it's my love for you makes me foolish. I came wi' a full heart to tell you about mysel', an' you begins about t' young maister. Forgive me, lass. Winnot you gi' me just a look. Rose, darlin'?"

"No; go away, an' don't carney me." She shook her shoulders waywardly. "It's not

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likely I'm going to blow hot an' cold all in a minute. I won't forgive you, so there."

But George was doggedly resolute.

"Yes, you will, honey." He took her by the shoulders, and turned round her scarlet, angry face to face his own. "You'll make friends, Rose, dear. You were always a sweet, forgivin' lass, an' you'll tell me if—"

She put one plump hand over his mouth.

"Stop there, lad. If I forgive you, it'll be to pay ye for holding yer peace. You an' me's long friends, an' will keep so, I hope, but if you wants me for a frien', dunnot speak o' yersel' in that way to me. Now I mun gae to gran'-mother: she's called twice whiles you've been talkin'. You can giv' my luv' to yer fooalks,"

She ended abruptly, kissed her hand, and ran away, as if she doubted her own power of escape from George's grasp.

He stood, looking puzzled and foolish, at the door which she had closed behind her.

"I'm a fool, a doited idiot," he said; "I sud hev won her fost, an' then I might ha' said what I pleased. I mun try again; sae long as

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there's no ither lad to come atween us, I'll win my Rose yet."

But his face was downcast as he went back to the Hall: all joyful anticipation had gone out of it;

This time he was more successful.

The squire met him at the entrance door and gave him a hearty welcome; and when Doris came to him, in her own sitting-room, she was very cordial and pleasant. George was impressed by the change in her manner; he felt far more at ease with her than he had felt at Steersley.

VNiVERSiTAS STVDII SALAMANTiNi

"It is too tiring for you, George, to go back again to Steersley to-day," she said; "you had better sleep here."

But George remained firm to his purpose. So long as the squire stayed in the room he felt at ease, but when Mr. Burneston left him alone with Doris his shyness came again. He kept silence.

"I wish father had come with you," she said—"I want so much to see him."

George shook his head. He was vexed with

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himself for feeling shy, and it seemed to him that, spite of all Mr. Hawnby's advice, he was disposed to judge his sister harshly.

"No, he'll not come here," he said coldly; "you mun come to t' Cairn if you want to see father."

Doris looked thoughtful for a minute.

"I see no reason why I should not go to see you all," she said; "only I could not travel alone,—either you or my father must come and fetch me," she added, with a bright smile; "but not just yet."

"It's a fine country about t' Cairn," George said—"steep hills as ye never saw the like on, one above t' other, an' ye can walk for miles on t' springin' heather."

Doris smiled; she thought Yorkshire hills after Swiss mountains would look like pigmies, but she only said,—

"Yes, I shall like to go to the Cairn some day—just now we have so many engagements."

George sighed. He had nearly said that no engagement ought to keep a daughter from her father, but he checked himself.

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"How's t' young lad—Maister Ralph, I mean?" he said.

For the first time Doris looked uneasy and confused. She bent over a camellia-tree on her little flower-table.

"He is at school," she said. "He is not coming home just yet."

George felt greatly relieved.

"I'm fain to hear that, Doris. A village is an idle place for a young lad to loiter about in."

But Doris was thinking of something else.

"Do you think," she said, "that mother could make room for Miss Masham as well as for me at the Cairn? She is coming to stay with us in the summer, and I am sure she would like to go with me."

George looked dissatisfied. He thought Doris ought to want to be with her parents, without needing any companion.

"We'd be fain to see Miss Masham," he said abruptly; "but we'd liefer you didn't wait for her company, Doris. Father's wearyin' to set eyes on you again."

"Well, I hope it will not be long before I go,"

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she said, “but I cannot fix the time. We may go to town this spring; but nothing is settled, and I can make no arrangement without consulting my husband.”

Again George sighed. He felt disappointed even in his own idea of Doris; he thought that she possessed too much mind to care for anything, as it seemed to him, so frivolous and fashionable as going to town in spring-time.

“I’d ha’ thought,” he said, “t’ squire’d ha’ found plenty to see after t’ long whiles he’s bin away, without runnin’ off again so soon.”

Doris held her head very stiffly; she did not want to disagree with George, still she thought him extremely presumptuous to find fault with her husband. But as she looked at him, there was a yearning earnestness in his tender brown eyes that stirred her heart with a feeling that had grown to be unusual—the strange tie of blood—and again she spoke more frankly than she could have thought it possible to speak to anyone.

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“George,” she said, in a warmer tone, “you see I have much to learn so as to be quite fit for my position, and I think I am more likely to learn among those with whom my life has to be passed than—than by keeping away from what is called society.”

George sat listening, trying to take in the full sense of her words, which seemed to him to hold some hidden meaning.

“I’m not sure if I’ve gaumed you reeghtly,” he said at last. “D’ye mean, Doris, ‘at you mun keep away fra t’ Cairn for the sake o’ keepin’ yerself a lady? If ye thinks that”—he rose, looking very tall and proud as he faced his sister—“why, then you an’ I are best to keep apart, I’m thinkin’.”

Doris was stung and deeply hurt. She had, so it seemed to her, conceded very much in making this revelation to her brother of the scheme she was forming with regard to her

future, and, instead of seeing that by this very frankness she had acted like a sister towards him, George chose to be offended by what was, she knew, true wisdom.

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"You are quite mistaken," she spoke in the icy voice which had always ended their childish disputes. "I meant—but it seems useless to explain to you." She broke off and paused; then she smiled up in her brother's face with that winning smile that never failed to conquer. "You cannot quite understand me, dear," she said, "and I do not blame you for it—we must see everything from such different points; only you can trust me, and believe that my love for you all has not changed, or, if it has, it is stronger and warmer than it was before I married. Will you say this to our father, George?—with my dearest love."

Her voice trembled, and her firm lips quivered, but her eyes were tearless. She was not carried away by her feelings, but she wished George to do her justice. And he was greatly touched; also he felt remorse for his own outburst.

"That I will, lass." He kissed her and shook her hand heartily. "An' I'm grieved I misdoubted ye. My thought was that wi' yer

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bonny face you'd maybe get spoiled among t' fine London fooalk. They're not o' much account, I've heard; but you'll not stay there long, maybe?"

Doris was saved an answer by Benjamin, who came to announce luncheon in his portly fashion.

Soon after luncheon George took leave, spite of Mr. Burneston's cordial invitation to stay. As he rode along, on a horse lent him by the squire, he pondered his sister's words.

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"Society?" he said slowly, "that's t' other name for t' world; Vanity Fair, old Bunyan rightly calls it. Must Doris go into it? Couldn't she stay quiet at t' Hall wiv her husband an' her books, an' all t' fine things she's got to amuse her, instead o' goin' to London, which is real Vanity Fair, I'm sure? I misdoubt her plan sorely. I'll not fret father wiv her doings; but I fear Doris 'll not come back fra Vanity Fair t' same as she goes doon there."

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BOOK IV. MOTHERHOOD.

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CHAPTER I. RALPH BURNESTON'S BROTHER

TOWARDS the end of the autumn holidays, Ralph Burneston, having chosen to travel all night, electrified first the village and then the Hall by arriving in a flood of morning sunshine. His first inquiry was for the housekeeper; and by her he was admitted to Mrs. Burneston's sitting-room, and introduced to his baby brother.

"Turn its face this way, Faith. Well, it's not so very ugly for a baby, and, thank God, it's not like the Barughs. I was afraid it would have red hair, like that terrible old farmer. There, that 'll do; take your rubbish away."

Ralph walked to the window, quite unheeding

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the "Hush! hush!" "Whisht! whisht!" which had accompanied his survey of his little brother; for Faith had gone into the dressing-room and taken the baby from its cradle in the absence of the nurse.

Faith looked down at the child, and then at Ralph; and then she said in a low tone—

"It's as like yersel', Master Ralph, as it can be; it's a Burneston, ivvery spit on't." She turned to carry the infant away.

"Babies are all alike. Let's have another look," Ralph said. "Poor little devil! What a funny thing to think I was such another little chap! By Jove! it's laughing at me! I think I like having a brother. Faith, after all. You see he won't interfere with me—"

Faith glanced at the half-open door of communication, but Mrs. Burneston was still lying asleep on a sofa in the bedroom within.

"I'll close the inner door, sir," she said. "I ought to have done it sooner. The mistris is asleep yonder." But Ralph was examining the baby's hand.

"How pretty its hand is! And look! don't move, Faith; its jolly little fingers have caught

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hold of me! Poor little chap! I suppose there was more fuss made when I was born, wasn't there? It must be horrid to be a second son, and to feel you've no land. A second son's a nobody, Faith, I can tell you; and it's worse for this poor little thing because his mother had no fortune of her own. Poor little chap! he'll have to earn his living and marry a rich wife. But I'll take care of him. There, that'll do; take it away; I must go to the stables," and he lounged out at the door.

Spite of her adoration for Ralph, Faith had a woman's natural feeling of worship for babies, and she resented the pitying manner in which the heir of Burneston seemed to regard his unconscious brother.

"It's a reeal shame that 'tis, honey," she said, as she laid the infant again in his cradle, "when ye's sike a beauty 'at waaz nivvers seen. Whisht! whisht! yey mun be a gude bairn, as gude as yey's bonny." And she stood patting the little soft roll till it sank into sleep again.

"Faith!"

The housekeeper started. Mrs. Burneston

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was calling her from the bedroom. Faith went in and found her young mistress sitting up and quite awake.

"I shall leave my room to-day," Doris said, "and I believe nurse is going away in a few days. I have called you in here, Mrs. Emmett, to ask you if you will take the superintendence of the nursery into your own hands. There are the two nursemaids, but I cannot trust baby to strangers. I know I can trust him fully to you, if you are willing to accept this charge. It need not interfere with your other duties."

Faith stood stupefied. Her intercourse with her young mistress had been simply official. Doris never spoke to her except about her duties, and Mrs. Emmett cherished the belief that if she gave the shadow of an excuse the new mistress would gladly get her dismissed. It took her several minutes to reconcile this flattering mark of confidence with Mrs. Burneston's previous cold reserve. She seemed to see some plan in it to make her lose her place, but Doris gave her no time for hesitation.

"I want you, please, to make up your mind

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at once," she said. "If you refuse, it will not affect your position here, but I prefer that baby should be under your charge; while he is young, he will, of course, require more of your personal superintendence, but I will take care that there shall be few visitors, so that you may not be overtaxed; and it seems to me you are quite competent to train baby's nurses in your own ways."

Faith's vanity was appeased. It was such a revelation to find that her young mistress, who had never praised anything but her jams, had really been studying her and appreciating her all this while. For these few moments she almost forgave Doris for having married the master of the Hall. She made a ceremonious curtsey.

"I'll be fain to do t' best I can to please you, ma'am," she said; "an' fer t' babe, onybody wad be fain to tak tent o' sike a bonny bairn."

"Very well; I am glad you think so; then you can take possession of the nurseries as soon as you like. Now send Burnell to me, please."

Doris smiled, and then, as soon as Faith had

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departed, she crossed her large room to the smaller one where the infant lay sleeping. Bending over it she kissed it passionately. She startled herself by her vehemence.

"How I love it!" she smiled; "but I suppose every woman loves her child more than she can love in any other way. I feel that Philip and everyone else—father even—are nothing now, compared with this precious little one. Oh! my darling!—my own, own sweet baby!" Again she kissed it fondly.

She had planned long ago, and settled it with her husband, that Faith should, if possible, rear her child. Her notion was that an old servant was far more likely to train it as she wished it to be trained than a new-comer who felt no interest in the Burnestons. She knew that her own and her mother's nursery traditions could not be trusted; and "early

habits are so important," Doris had said to herself in the long solitary hours she had lately passed. The difficulty had been how to speak to Faith on such a subject; but Doris's quick ears had heard not only Ralph's loud speeches, but also

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the soft crooning over her babe when the housekeeper thought herself quite alone with it.

And now her difficulties were ended and the future safety of her baby seemed secured—for though she did not like Faith, she respected her qualities and felt full trust in them—yet, instead of feeling soothed and relieved, it seemed to Doris as if all aim had gone out of her life.

Her husband had taken her to London, and she had soon become aware of her own deficiencies, but these did not crush her into shyness and *mauvaise honte*. She was greatly admired, and at first her husband watched her anxiously, wondering what the effect of so much worship would produce; but it did not turn his young wife's head. She was pleased to find that spite of her shortcomings her fascination over others was absolute; and her feeling of gratitude to her husband gained strength as she reflected that but for him she might have been like some hidden gem in an unexplored mine.

"I can never thank you enough, dear," she said to him one day while they were in London.

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"Suppose you had not married me, I must have pined for want of a congenial atmosphere."

He was deeply touched: for Doris rarely gave him a glimpse of her inner feelings.

"I had my reward when you married me; and if you will always love me, my darling, I can wish for nothing more."

Doris smiled, but she thought that she could give him far greater happiness by studying and perfecting herself in all the duties of her position, and making herself really fit to be mistress of Burneston.

Sometimes Philip Burneston had marvelled at his wife's persevering pursuit of pleasure. She would never refuse an invitation if there were any possible means of accepting it; she was most dutiful in returning calls, and in attending concerts, fancy bazaars, and flowershows; and yet she seemed to take no real interest in these amusements, but to fulfil engagements as a matter of daily routine.

At a lecture at the Royal Institution they met Gilbert Raine. The meeting between the two old friends was at first stiff on both sides;

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but Doris received Mr. Raine most graciously, and before the end of the evening Gilbert was conquered.

"Good night, old fellow," he said, as he and Burneston stood together a moment, after putting Doris into her carriage. "You knew what you were about. I congratulate you heartily; you have won a prize. She is quite charming; a most sweet and gracious creature."

Next day he dined with the Burnestons; and he was greatly struck with the intelligence and interest shown by Doris about some plans for the improvement of the property.

"Philip was right after all," he said, as he went home to his rooms. "That girl has good sense, and feeling too. She don't care a fraction for all the fashion and rubbish, compared with her home duties, though she is so refined and graceful. And yet, from the way people talk about the beautiful Mrs. Burneston, I expected to find her head

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completely turned. It's a wonderful piece of luck for Phil as it has turned out, but for all that it was a dangerous experiment."

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Doris had learned one fact in London, which had been unknown to her in her secluded existence, and that was, the position of a younger son in such a family as the Burnestons. She had consoled herself by remembering that at the time of her marriage her father had told her that she, and any children she might have, were provided for. But she had shrunk from the contemplation of any pecuniary advantage, and had not asked any questions.

Ralph's pity for her baby had not only revived the feeling of dislike which he had created on her wedding-day, but had filled her with misgivings. Was it then quite impossible that out of all these large estates some part could be settled on her boy? But this was not all. During these days of enforced solitude her thoughtful mind had gone back to its old habit of planning the future—a habit which first her foreign journey, and then her busy London life, had greatly checked, and now Ralph's words called up vividly a picture which as yet had only foreshadowed itself dimly. She saw herself left a young widow.

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turned out of the Hall by her husband's son, before she had attained the position which she had resolved to make for herself. What chance could she have, she asked herself, of rearing her child as Ralph's equal?—for Doris had an almost slavish belief in the value of surrounding influences, as a means of culture.

She stood, looking down at the sleeping baby with a troubled face.

"It will be worse for him," she thought, "to be reared here, to be accustomed to luxury, and all this charming outer life, and then to have to give most of it up; and yet,"—the far-off questioning gaze in those deep liquid eyes grew intense—"what else can happen? Whenever his father dies, he and I must leave the Hall—we can never live here dependent on Ralph,—only,"—a bright gleam of hope spread from lip to brow, irradiating the lovely face, and bringing the colour on the delicate skin,—"only"—but the vision she was contemplating disturbed her serenity, the light faded out of her face, and she frowned, as if in rebuke of herself.

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Then she leant over her babe and kissed it, as if the touch of its innocent face was a charm against unpleasant thoughts.

"I must know soon," she said, "how my boy is provided for; but I will be very kind to Ralph, after all he is baby's brother, and it will be my fault if we don't get on well together."

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CHAPTER II. AN EMPTY HEAD IS THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP.

DORIS was not impulsive or imaginative, she was specially realistic and practical; and yet that night, when she was alone, she felt that she had deceived herself.

She had said it must be her own fault if she did not get on with Ralph; and a careless observer would have pronounced her manner towards her step-son kind and pleasant. But Ralph's manner was repelling; he was not at ease with her; he had not forgiven her for marrying his father. His stiff, indifferent greeting when they met roused Doris's pride.

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He had addressed all his conversation to his father, and when she joined in the talk he became cold and polite, and seemed to lose all

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interest in what was going forward. Doris had grown colder and colder, and when at dinner-time the lad made some disparaging remarks on farmers, she flushed scarlet. Then by a great effort she checked her anger.

“After all, perhaps I misjudge him,” she thought, “he possibly considers that I now belong to his own class, and speaks without reflecting or wishing to pain me. I will not dislike him.”

She turned to Ralph, and forcing one of her sweet rare smiles, she began to question him about his school life. He answered her courteously, but this was evidently not a successful topic, and she changed to their own journey, and told him of some of the wonders she had seen in Rome and Florence. It seemed to her that if George had so enjoyed this kind of talk, this better taught youth must surely feel still more interest in it.

His father had always refused to take Ralph abroad with him, and the lad listened, but with ill-concealed indifference, to her descriptions; and then he asked her how she had

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liked Ascot, and whether she did not think riding in the Park the chief enjoyment of London life.

“I liked it at first,” she said, “but I soon wearied of it—it grew so monotonous. We used to prefer long rides a little way out of London.”

Ralph’s eyes opened widely.

"Awfully slow, I should think," he said, "one can do that in the country; in fact, it's the only thing a lady can do. I can't fancy how people can go on living in a place like this for weeks together without hunting and shooting to look forward to," he ended with an impatient groan.

Mr. Burneston had kept silence in the hope that Doris and Ralph were making acquaintance, but he looked up at the sudden change in his son's voice.

"You used to be happy enough here," he said, smiling.

"Yes, when I was a little chap I did not know any better, but a fellow can't always be a baby. Ridley says there have been

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no birds this year worth speaking about, and this is not a hunting country. I really don't see what a fellow's to do," he added discontentedly.

"You may ride my horse, if you like, for a change," said Doris. "She is such a pretty creature. I have named her Thekla."

Ralph brightened a little. "I will go and look at her this evening;" and then he added, "But how about wet days? my father is no hand at billiards, and I suppose you can't play at all?"

Doris laughed.

"No, I have never learned to play; you shall teach me. But don't you ever read?"

Ralph shook his head and looked contemptuous.

"Hate it. I am bored quite enough with books at Eton, thank you, I like a sporting paper well enough, but I can't bear the sight of a book. But don't you trouble about me, Mrs.

Burneston," he said politely. "I will find some way of amusing myself. Now I am going to see the mare."

Doris felt a glow of self-respect. How inferior

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in every quality but personal beauty was this lad to her own brother; and as she thought of George and the interest he had shown in all she told him, it seemed to her that she had not thoroughly appreciated her brother.

"You will soon get on with Ralph, I see," said Mr. Burneston, far too happy in having his wife down-stairs again to suspect discord. Since his marriage, life had been gilded, little worries and vexations had no power over his facile temper.

"I hope so," and then she added slowly, "though I'm afraid there is not much sympathy between us."

Her husband smiled admiringly. "You are so good about everything, child," he said, "and so you expect too much of others. Ralph is quite a lad, and has to learn like everyone else; but don't you trouble about him, my pet, the world will teach him all that is necessary. A boy cannot be reared like a girl, remember."

Doris sighed, but she did not attempt to dispute her husband's wisdom. As yet her faith in his judgment was implicit. It was a

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powerful proof of her belief in her surroundings that she failed to see the strong mental likeness between Ralph Burneston and her husband.

Her new life had been hitherto so varied that there had been no want of subjects of talk. Once only in that first visit of Mr. and Mrs. Boothroyd she had been pained by some words spoken by Mr. Burneston in regard to a woman's education, but she had soon forgotten these. She found in her husband the refinement of speech and manner which she so highly valued, and he seemed to her so superior to anyone else that she was quite satisfied. Mr. Raine's talk had fascinated her, and roused her curiosity, but his abrupt, eccentric manner weakened the wish she had felt for a longer talk with him.

"Come and say good night to baby," she said to her husband, and they left the room together.

Meantime Ralph sauntered to the stables, but not finding any of the men about, he

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changed his mind, and went out beside the river.

The evening promised rain, there was a red glow in the east, and the clouds seemed to be in a hurry to change their quarters, careering from one part of the sky to the other, as if they were playing "Puss in the corner."

As Ralph walked on, looking at the water, he saw a fish dart to the surface.

"By Jove!" he said, "that's an idea! I'll have some fishing to-morrow, and I'll get that fellow Ephraim Crewe to come with me; he's the only chap in the village who knows anything, unless it's old Sunley, and he's such a pragmatical old fool."

He turned up the steep street, and soon reached Crewe's farm.

Mrs. Crewe came out, red as a peony with delight, and full of apologies and curtsies.

"It's maist unfortnit," she said, "bud Ephraim he's ghen tu Redcar fer twae ur mebbe three deays, an' Ah donnot look fer 'im then, Maister Ralph—bud appen it's fer t' fishin', awd Sunley's sprack at 't."

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Ralph was tired with his journey, and it seemed to him that everything was going cross. It was all the fault of this foolish marriage. His father had not been much of a companion formerly, but he had been better than no one.

"Now," he murmured, "I suppose we shall have to go into the drawing-room after dinner instead of getting a smoke in the evening. It's a most cursed bore; if she were a lady it would be different, but I can never be at my ease with a person of that kind, there's no counting on what she may say or do; and besides, a half-bred woman is always more fussy and formal than a lady is."

It was lighter at the top of the hill than it had been beside the river, and before he reached Church Farm, Ralph saw that old Sunley was not in his usual place outside the cottage door. His chair even was not there, and a fresh burst of impatience rose to the lad's lips.

"By Jove!" he said angrily, "it's beyond bearing, everything is against me; so seldom

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as I come to Burneston, they might all be ready to do what they can for me."

Sunley's door was fast shut, it was evident he was absent. The next door stood wide open, but Ralph had always avoided Mrs. Duncombe; he had a horror of deafness, and he turned away hastily from the cottage door.

Something, he could hardly tell what, caught his ear; he stood still listening; was it the wind among the fir branches? No, the air was calm and still, spite of the restlessness among the clouds overhead. Then he thought the sound might be made by the rustle of the pigs among the straw of Church Farm yard, and he turned at once to the white gate.

There was not a pig to be seen; the only living creatures were the black and white ducks dipping their broad yellow beaks into the horse-pond as they swam merrily round it. Ralph looked on to the gate leading into the garden of the farm-house. He remembered that George Barugh had formerly been a sort of amusement to him in his holidays. "But I was only a boy then," said this man of seventeen

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"I should find the poor fellow dull enough now. What could have possessed my father to make that poor homely lad his brother-in-law? By-the-bye, I must have it clearly understood that I am not to be thrown in the way of those Barughs."

As his eyes rested on the farm-house he saw figures in the garden, and next minute a woman came forward to the gate.

Ralph remembered her at once.

"Good evening, Mrs. Swaddles," he said. "Where's Shadrach? He can fish, can't he?"

Mrs. Swaddles curtseyed and came out into the yard.

"Gude een, sir," Mrs. Swaddles curtseyed again, and then she shook her untidy golden locks. "Eh, to be sure, Shadrach's gude at t' fishin', bud his nae at yam; he 'es gehn wiv Farmer Crewe an' Maister Sunley tu Redcar, sir, tu seea t' booat reeace."

"Confound Redcar!" Ralph said angrily; then his eyes wandered back to the garden, where a slight figure stood in the shadow

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of the porch. "Who's that standing there?" he said carelessly.

Mrs. Swaddles grinned. She was still a fine young woman, but the action showed how fat her double chin was.

"Wheea, sir," she said, "yu kens Rase; sheea's bahded i' t' village thruf t' tahme that her fayther an' mudher deed, an' left her tu Missis Duncombe; an' that war a matter o' sexteen years sin."

"Rose Duncombe?" A small, freckled, fat face, seen years ago, rose up in Ralph's memory, and recalled an early disgust. "Oh, yes," he said, turning his eyes away, "I remember her."

But the figure had come through the gate. Rose saw that the young squire was going away without speaking to her, and she was determined to get the chance of preventing this.

"Good evenin', sir," she curtseyed; but there was a pout on her lips at his indifference. As he turned round the pout vanished into a blush and dimpling smiles that made Rose

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look her prettiest. The young man gave a slight start and held out his hand to her.

"Why, I ought to have known you," he said, as recognition flashed on him. "How could I be so stupid? I saw you in church, Rose, on the wedding-day, but I couldn't make you out afterwards. How's Mrs. Duncombe? I'll go in and see her."

Full of sudden interest in the deaf woman, he was ready to lead the way to her cottage.

"Grandmother's a-bed, sir," said Rose; "but I'll tell her you war so good as to ask for her. She'd be proud to see you, sir." And her blue eyes gazed at him full of admiration.

Ralph felt flattered. Rose was prettier than he had thought her.

"I say, Mrs. Swaddles, has Shadrach still got that terrier?" he said, catching at an excuse for lingering. "Fury he used to call her, I think?"

"Yu meeans Pickles, sir; yu called t' awd lass yersel'. Sheea's gitten fewer poops, an' thur as likely as can be." Then, as Ralph

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turned back towards the farm-house, she added, "Coom in an' sit ye doon, sir, an' Ah'll show yu t' poops."

She bustled in first, conscious that the room was in disorder, for Rose had just been lecturing her on untidy ways. Rose was a sort of queen to Sukey Swaddles. At first the girl had turned up her nose at these successors of the Barughs, for Shadrach was only the vicar's head man; but by degrees Sukey's flattery and respectful ways had grown pleasant to Rose, and she had taken to visiting Mrs. Swaddles, to the infinite disgust of Joseph Sunley.

Ralph slackened his pace. Rose held back to let him pass through the gate, which she kept open.

"Confound it, you have grown so pretty, Rose,"—Ralph blushed like a girl—"that it is no wonder I did not know you." He looked at her, and Rose blushed too.

"I knew you, sir," she said, in a low voice. "I sud ha' known you anywhere."

"Should you?" Ralph's dignity as a man.

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felt reproved. "Well, all the same, I've altered a good deal. I'll come and see your grand-mother to morrow. Rose," he said. "Is she as deaf as ever?"

"Eh—she's a good deal deafer," said Rose, sighing. And she raised her eyes piteously, and looked into Ralph's.

There was nothing in the words, and yet they both felt that a bond was established between them. That exchange of complaint and sympathy had given them a new interest in their lives—days perhaps is a truer rendering; for Ralph's notion of life was how to make each day as "jolly" as possible; while Rose's creed arrived at the same result by an inverse process. She wanted to be free from each day's work, and each day's trouble in making her grandmother hear.

The gaze lasted an instant, and then the youth said, "Let me hold the gate," and took it from her plump fingers.

A glow of pleasure spread over Rose's face as she went into the house. She was proud Mrs. Swaddles should see the young squire's politeness to her.

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"Theer's Pickles, sir." Mrs. Swaddles pointed to a basket in a corner of the dim room, from which came a murmur of sobbing and yelping; but at the sound of footsteps Pickles jumped out, and ran, first sniffing, and waggling her tail and body, and then with a prolonged whine of welcome, to introduce herself to Ralph. Sukey immediately sprawled beside the basket, and produced four creatures something like large white maggots, with pink toes and noses, and thick legs, snorting and snuffling in the uninteresting fashion of very young puppies.

"Wad. yu hev twae on 'em, sir? ur mair an yu will; Shadrach 'll be reeght doon fain."

"No, thank you." Ralph looked disgusted. "Put 'em back, Mrs. Swaddles. They're regular mongrels; not one of 'em a scrap like the mother. I should drown 'em all if they were mine."

“Massy! droon ‘em! Tu think o’ that noo.” Mrs. Swaddles put back the puppies and stood upright. Her abundant light hair had come unfastened with her exertions, and streamed over her broad shoulders in roughened masses. But

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she stood still, unconscious of this accident, one dirty finger in her mouth, pondering Ralph’s words.

“Well, good night.” He had been looking at Rose, regardless of Mrs. Swaddles’s dismay at the doom he had pronounced on. the puppies; now he nodded to the dishevelled creature and turned to the door. “You’re coming my way, aren’t you?” he said to Rose. He spoke very low, without looking round.

Sukey Swaddles roused up, pushed the hair out of her eyes, and spoke out suddenly—

“Waaz Ah tu say tu Shadrach ‘at ‘e mun droond yal t’ poops?”

Ralph laughed.

“He can do just as he likes. If they were mine they’d be drowned to-night.”

He looked for Rose, but she had slipped out and away. He could not see her anywhere, though he loitered through the farmyard. When he reached the gate he saw that the door of Mrs. Buncombe’s cottage was now closed.

“By Jove, she’s a nice, well-behaved little girl,” he thought. “She doesn’t choose to be seen walking about the village with me.”

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“Good night, Mrs. Swaddles. Don’t forget to tell Shadrach about the fishing.”

"What an extraordinary difference there is in men's minds," he said, as he walked down the hill again. "I might just as well fall in love with this girl, and want to marry her; for she's prettier than Mrs. Burneston, and it seems to me my father married his wife entirely for her looks. I don't believe in her manners. I expect they're put on."

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CHAPTER III. AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR AT THE CAIRN

THE sun has set, and a broad grey mist is rising fast from the valley, blotting out the villages and farmsteads that lie cradled beside the river and the tall trees that mark its course; blotting out, too, the form of the hills across the valley till their tops grow confused with clouds in a grey expanse bordered by luminous red, and this as it mounts changes to pale green, across which steal narrow leaden-hued cloud lines.

The day has been very hot, so hot that George—who has been rather ailing of late—has feared to expose himself to the glare of sunshine on the unsheltered moor, and this evening he has strolled out to the highest point near

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the farm, a weird, desolate spot, where a heap of black grit stones, piled one on another, seem to record some crime enacted there: this is really the Cairn. All around stretches the wild moor, strown here and there with long layers of grey stone which rise up in abrupt crags at the edge of the weird platform, where valleys yawn between the Cairn and the still loftier hills miles away. These hills rise sharply from the purple line of moor and the mist which rises also from the valleys on this side of it; but the mist here does not shroud human life and dwellings as it does on the other side; even in broad noon-day glare all is desolate, one stretch of purple heather or bare brown moor and faint blue hills beyond.

George loved this vast solitude; he was often glad to get away from his mother's weak, purposeless talk, and although he was now able in many ways to share his father's work, still he had to husband his strength and often to take complete rest.

As the long leaden clouds spread westwards he turned to go home; he was two miles from

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the farm, and it would be almost dark before he reached it, but still he lingered.

" 'Twad do Doris a sight o' good to come up here, body and mind too," he said, " 'twad blow away t' mists o' self-conceit an' worldliness she's gettin' over her. I'm feared she's sorely changed. She ought to ha' cum an' seen father long since. Well, maybe t' babe 'll work a blessed change in her."

He longed sorely to see his little nephew, but Doris had not sent a second invitation to the Cairn. She had written from time to time putting off her promised visit—but only a few days ago she had written to her mother saying she hoped, when baby was old enough to travel, to take him to see his grand-parents, and this promise had healed the soreness which taxed even John Barugh's faith in his beautiful child.

George wondered what would happen about the child's bringing up; his simple mind went directly to truths without being turned aside by the zigzags circumstances seem to create for some people.

"Doris s'u'd be like Hannah," he said, "all

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mothers s'u'd; she s'u'd give her little one to the Lord from t' first, an' make it t' child's first thought to love our dear Lord an' seek Him in ivvery person an' ivvery place. I'd

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like to hev a little chap to train fer God; an' yet it's an awesome thought, fer one wad hev to live fair up to one's teachin', young uns is so sharp."

He sighed as he began to descend the rocky, rugged path that led him beside the edge of a narrow gorge, dark and deep, with frowning crags ranged on either side. George was pondering the often-pondered puzzle, why resolves are so strong in theory, so weak in practice; why he failed so signally in practising what he preached. "There's a way out of it," he said at last. "We shall find Him, if we watch for His light to guide us. I'm ower apt to trust to my own light."

He looked back at the lofty expanse of moor. In the distance, a large bird, a speck in the fast deepening gloom, rose from the Cairn and swooped slowly away, as if it rested on its wings. "That's how I should rest," he said. "He's always by me, with me, in me,—if I'll

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only rest on Him, an' let Him guide my will an' my tongue. Good Lord deliver me."

He raised his hat and stood still.

But it behoved him to give up reverie and walk with real care, for the blocks of grit scattered here and there were so overgrown with brake and gorse that more than once he had nearly fallen over them as he struck across the moor, guided by the sound of rushing water. A little stream came down from the hills to the east, and found its way over rocks and stones to the village in the valley.

At last he reached the waterfall. Here was a little wild glen, a deep rent in the broad moor which formed a steep and rocky valley; down into this wild nook the little stream from the hills fell noisily about thirty feet, in a double thread of glistening water, and then went on its way, half hidden by masses of grey and moss-grown rock gemmed with tufts of heather and the exquisite green of blechnum fern. On each side rose the huge

walls of rock rent with dark fissures, the edges fringed with long sprays of crowberry. The valley curved in and out, following the course of the stream,

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and in the triangular opening at its farthest end was a vision of lofty hills rising one behind another. Just above the rush-bordered stream a slender ashling sprang seemingly from the brown rock itself, its berries a deep orange.

As George came to the edge of this noisy fall he saw some one seated on one of the huge blocks of stone half-way down the opposite side of the glen. It was not his father, the figure was smaller, and seemed to crouch. A stranger was such a new sight at the Cairn that the lad quickened his steps with a feeling of expectation.

"Hollau, lad! Yu've come doon fra t' cloods hev ye? Yer mudher sehs, sehs sheea, mah lad's oop at t' Cairn, yu mun needs gan yer weays an finnd un'. An' Ah sehs 'Neea. Ah'll bahde tiv 'e cums;' patience iz a deeal better then brokken beeans—sae theer noo."

George was breathless, partly from his rapid descent, and also from the surprise of seeing Joseph Sunley seated as quietly on the heather-crowned boulder as if he were sitting in his own arm-chair opposite Church Farm at Burneston, with one of the farm dogs beside him,

"Why, Mr. Sunley," he gasped, "who'd ha'

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thought o' seein' you hereabouts. How did you get doon there?"

"Woonkers!"—Sunley waved his hand in his usual fashion, as if he wished to put aside all other thoughts and opinions than his own—"there's a mint mair thowt on an' kenned then sike as yu can think uv, 'at gans meeasin' aboot at yal inds t' day thruf."

"What is it?"—George's sympathies roused at once. "Has aught happened at t' Hall to my sister or t' babe?"

"Neea, neea; t' boot is on t' wrang fut." Sunley looked discontented. "T' missis an' t' bairn's lahkeley eneeaf; bud Ah'd ha' thowt, George, 'at theer waaz yan nearer tiv' yu i' t' village then at t' Hall."

There was a sly inquiry in his small, half-shut eyes, which set George's ears tingling, and made his heart beat. He looked away over the moor, and then he crossed the head of the waterfall.

"You mun tell me going along, Mister Sunley," he said. "Ye can climb up easier lower down the valley. I'll come an' meet ye: t' darkness is gaining on us o' t' moor, an' we find

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it none so easy to win back to t' Cairn without a light."

Sunley got up stiffly, and moved to where George pointed. He was some time climbing the hill, and then he gave a sarcastic look at George.

"It mun be tellt, lad; nobbut yu kenned yal, yu'd be fain to listen tiv't at yance; bud t' yoong yallays thenks they'r reeght, an' that t' awd fooalks gans toitlin' an' toiterin' aboot at yaal inds athoot onny wut. Yis, yis, Ah knaws t' ways on 'em," he added pettishly, and then walked on in silence.

George waited, but Mr. Sunley was really huffed. He had heard of George's visits to the Rector of Steersley, and it seemed to him that he, the acknowledged Mentor and guide

of the youth of Burneston, was completely superseded by "an awd craw 'at can't sae mich as fire a gun off."

"How d'ye find my father and mother?" George said at last.

"Ah seeas neea chaange," Joseph said sullenly; but as they went along the straight path across the moor, which he knew must soon bring them to the farmhouse, he made a dead

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stop, and laid his hand on George's arm. "Ah've nane comed sae far tu see aither yan ur t' ither. Ah've corned tu seea yersel', an tu talk wi' yu aboot what's yer ain business," he said reproachfully, but with a keen look in his small eyes. He knew that an appeal to the lad's feelings was irresistible.

"It's reeght kind on you then, Mister Sunley, an' I'm sorry I was not indoors when you cam; nut but what mother wad see to you better than I could ha' done."

Sunley waved his hand.

"Yer mudher's yallays menseful," he said; "theer's neea takking her unawares. Eh, lad, yu s'u'd seea t' mummacks at t' farmhoose noo; t' lass Sukey theer's nowt bud a trail-tangs. Ah hes tell'd Rase sae mair an yance an' yance ageean. Ah misses yu sairly, mah lad."

George's interest quickened.

"I don't think Rose would find much to say to Mrs. Swaddles," he said. "She seemed to me a slovenly, stupid woman."

Sunley stopped and slapped George's shoulder. "Yu've sed it, lad. Them's t' wo'ds 'at

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fits her. Sheea's a fondy, an' Ah tell't Rase shu'd best keep aloof; bud neea, neea, sheea'd only ha' sedd Ah war a meddlin' awd fogrum. Waes me, lad; she's gangin' tu rewin her ain gate." He drew in his breath and shook his head.

George grew suddenly pale, but it was now too dusk for the sexton to note the change.

"Ah dizn't ken hoo mich store yu set by Rase," he said, "bud I sey sheeall gang to rewin, lad, if it 's 'at sheea's nut guided."

"What do you mean?" George had recovered the first shock, and he remembered the old man's prejudices. "Ye're apt to be hard, Mr. Sunley; a lass with such a face as Rose has will always have admirers;" then the uneasiness he really felt got beyond control. "What's the matter? Speak out. I'd liefer ye'd say it oot, an' ha' done wi' 't. Has aught happened?"

"Tell 't oot! gently, lad, 'at's jist what Ah can't deea; theer's nowt deean yit, bud theer's t' yoong lad, Ralph, littin' an' lattin' efter Rase, an' sheea thenks a deal o' 'im Ah knaws,

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by t' looks on her. Sheea's a fond feeal an' maks leeght o' mah warnin's, bud mebbe, lad, sheea'd hearken tu yu."

George felt stunned; he had not dreaded anything like this; he knew that it was far more serious than any village flirtation. It seemed to him that he had himself put this idea into Rose's head. He walked on, bewildered, in silence, and Sunley did not disturb him. The old man was tired out with his journey and anxious to get to bed.

At last George spoke.

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"I'll not meddle with Rose, Mister Sunley; after all, it's not her fault if that foolish lad misbehaves himself, for *he* goes after her—Rose is not one to run after any man; don't you take notice about it to father nor mother neither, an' I'll get t' young fellow sent away fra' Burneston."

Sunley was surprised at his calmness, though George's caution pleased him.

"Yis," he said, "yu're reeght, lad, t' least sed seeanest mended; oot o' seeght is maist times oot o' mahnd wi' t' lasses. Hallau," as the dog ran forward with a joyful bark, "theer's t' fayther."

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They had reached the farm without seeing how near to it they were, and in the gloom there suddenly appeared the tall farmer, standing in front of the low stone wall which ran round the farmhouse and buildings.

"Hey, Maister Sunley," John called out, "Ah thowt yu war a streayed sheep, an' Ah war comin' efter yu wiv t' collie."

At supper his mother rallied George about his silence. He had made no attempt to revisit Burneston, and she had begun to hope he had given up Rose. Now she feared that Joseph Sunley had brought some message which had rekindled his love.

"Lit t' lad be, missis." Sunley never let slip the chance of snubbing a woman. "Nae doobt he's weary wi' sae mich clahmin', bud Ah's fain tu seea he can clahm reeght weel, he's fahne an' hearty noo."

George laughed.

"Well," he got up and nodded to the three, "I'm real tired now, an' so I guess is Mr. Sunley. Good night to ye all."

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Dorothy sat silent, her lips pressed together; her motherly instinct told her that fatigue was

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not George's motive for withdrawing so early. She waited a short time, and then went up the old oak staircase and tapped at his bedroom door. This was made, like the floor and walls of the long dark gallery, of oak planks, and through the chinks came the glimmer of George's light.

No answer; she waited, and then lifted the heavy latch.

"Stop—I'm comin'," George said; "don't come in, mother."

He came to the door without his candle—he did not want her to know that he was writing—and she could not see his face.

"George, lad," she said tenderly, "you're in trouble; tell your mother what 't is."

He waited; then he said—

"I cannot tell it, an' ye cannot help me, mother, in the way you means. I must keep my trouble to myself, thank you." He stopped.

Dorothy gave a smothered sob.

"Eh, George," she said sadly, "once was a time when your mother was more to ye than she's come to be lately."

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In the dark she felt his arm round her neck and his hearty loving kisses.

"You war nivvers dearer than you are, mother mine. Why, I cud nivver love you enough for all yer goodness to me, but this trouble's not all my own." Then more cheerfully he added, "But you can help me in a way, an' it's a powerful way too, mother; pray for me that I may be guided to do right and not seek after my own will."

Dorothy sighed heavily.

"Eh, lad," she said, "ye don't know what ye're askin'. What good can the prayers of such as me do you?"

He kissed her yet more fondly.

"Shall I tell you what Mr. Hawnby told me?" he said reverently; "he said, 'There's nothing like a mother's prayers, lad, remember that, and it may help to keep you in mind how much you owe your mother.' That's what he said."

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CHAPTER IV. A WARNING

DORIS had earnestly battled with her dislike to Ralph, but day by day, in spite of her efforts, it grew stronger; when her husband praised Ralph she had to make an effort to repress the harsh judgment that rose to her lips. And yet all the time she knew that she was unjust, unreasonable, that in Ralph's position she should not have behaved any better than he did. She had not once complained, but she wondered her husband did not notice the complete indifference with which his son treated her. Ralph was never rude, but he made Doris feel that he did not want her, and that she came between him and his father.

But these thoughts only came to her in

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Ralph's presence, and these two rarely met except at meals. Her baby so engrossed the young mother that Mr. Burneston already complained that she thought of no one else.

She gave up its management implicitly to Faith Emmett, but she would sit gazing at it lying in its cradle, dreaming out for it a brilliant future—dreaming out, too, the part she would play of perfect motherhood. No child had ever been loved as she would love her little Philip. It was a great joy to Doris that her child could bear his father's name.

Faith was secretly aggrieved by Mrs. Burneston's long visits to the nursery, although if Doris had been less devoted the housekeeper would have railed at her want of motherly love. She was taken by surprise one morning when Doris came up sooner than usual after breakfast, and instead of sitting there with the child in her arms, only paid a short visit, and then went on to her room.

She had scarcely spoken, and there was a frown on her delicate face and a slight flush. Faith noticed, too, that she was more than ever erect and stately.

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"She ha' bin hevin' words wi' Ralph. I kenned it wad be sooner or later, an' noo we sal see which side t' squire 'll tak' atween 'em. My word, if it comes aboot that he turns against his first-born!"

It was a long time since such a dire gleam had shot from the yellow eyes; it seemed to reach little Phil, for he turned uneasily in his cradle, but Faith did not heed him. Her keen wits were divining how to discover what had chanced at breakfast-time to upset the methodical ways of her mistress.

But when, at the appointed time, she went down to give her orders to Mrs. Hazelgrave, Faith could only gather that Mrs. Burneston had received a letter that morning which she had read to herself, and that, instead of lingering to chat over the morning's news with the squire, she had put the letter in her pocket and left the room.

As Mrs. Emmett went upstairs again by the back way, she caught a glimpse of the tall slender figure of her mistress crossing the courtyard dressed for walking.

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"Theer's something goin' on out o' t' common," the housekeeper thought.

A letter from George had greatly troubled Doris. He had hesitated what to do; first he thought he would go and speak to Rose, fearing to be a means of stirring family strife at the Hall, but he could not bring himself to seek her again, and yet it seemed to him that he ought to consider her happiness before that of anyone else.

"She cannot love such a lad as that yet," he said, "but she'll be dazed an' flattered wiv his nonsense, an' maybe she'll go on to earnest while he's only sporting and trifling just because he's nothing to do. I'll be bound it isn't Rose's fault, but for all that I must take some note on't, as Mr. Sunley says she heeds ne'er a one but me; an' settin' all else apart, I'm bound to hev a care of her."

So after long and painful thought he decided to write to Doris. He felt that the squire would have considered his interference presumptuous.

In his letter he asked his sister either to speak

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to Ralph or to caution Rose, but not to speak of him in the matter. Rose would, doubtless, get over this folly, but she would not forget or forgive the person who took Ralph Burneston's company and flattery away from her; and. George had still a too painful remembrance of of her sudden anger with him when they last met, to run the risk of again provoking it.

Perhaps the vexation Doris felt as she read the letter was more caused by her brother's evident love for Rose than by Ralph's misconduct; it was secretly pleasant to feel that she had not misjudged her husband's son, and that he really did not deserve her esteem. Yet, spite of the bias which her jealousy gave to her judgment, she shrank from this pleasure as from something evil. No, if she could manage any other way she would be generous to Ralph, and she would keep this matter from her husband.

"He would be so very much annoyed" she thought, "and George is very good to say he wishes to try to prevent family discord; and yet his goodness amounts to silliness. Why does he ask me to deal tenderly with Ralph? He says it is because the boy has had no

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mother. I wonder why sons set so much more store by the good they learn from mothers than daughters seem to do. Is it because they see so much less of the mother's daily life? And yet in my case and George's this has been reversed, and, according to this reasoning, it is I who ought to think I owe much to my mother." There was an incredulous smile on her lip as she ended.

She had taken the longer way round by the vicarage instead of going up the steep village street. As yet she had not lived long enough at the Hall to feel at her ease with the people of Burneston. But, instead of shortening this long walk by crossing the glebe-field and coming out opposite Rose's cottage, either through Church Farm or by the churchyard, she went on along the Avenue, as the road was called at this point from the grand old trees on either side of it, and then followed the dusty cross road on the right which brought her past the church on to the Steersley high road, opposite Rose's cottage.

She hated Church Farm, and above all she

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hated the vision which that glebe-field gate always recalled; the sunny, golden-starred meadow, and the girl swinging, with lilac pinafore and sun-bonnet and long sun-burnt arms, and then blushing under Mr. Burneston's gaze. There was an entire contradiction in her mind when she looked back at her life, as at something gone for ever, though the contradiction was as unconscious as the look over her shoulder from the gate which had then created her brilliant future life.

She was not ashamed of having been that girl, but she hated to think that her refined husband could have conceived a sudden passion for her as she then was. She always turned from this thought resolutely; it seemed to her that if she dwelt on it Philip Burneston must sink in her esteem, for mere personal beauty was in Doris's eyes contemptible, a quality that might belong to the most uncultivated; and yet she rejoiced in the remarkable loveliness of her child, "for he is lovely," she thought; "even the doctor said, 'What a wonderfully pretty baby!' "

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"Yes," she said pensively, as at last she paused before the stone cottages, "my boy will be quite as handsome as Ralph, but oh, how superior he shall be in everything else!"

On the door-sill she stopped a few seconds to recollect herself.

"I hope Philip will not be vexed with me for this interference; but, no,—he will see that I wished to spare him vexation, and more than once he has asked me to go and see Rose and her grandmother, and—and—I have always shrunk from it and have felt vexed that he asked me to go."

This was all that troubled Doris, only the fear of vexing her husband, not the dislike to having thoughts unshared by him, to speaking words unknown to him, to acting without being sure that he would approve the action; but from a child she had depended on

herself for judgment and had drawn others to depend on her; doubt of her own wisdom was the last doubt likely to trouble her.

The inner door was not close shut; she went into the little entrance and tapped.

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"Come in, please." And then Rose pulled the door open, keeping herself hidden behind it with a glad expectant look on her bright face.

"Good morning." Mrs. Burneston spoke gently, but she did not smile.

When she saw who her visitor was, Rose grew red and shy. She curtsied, and then set a chair for Mrs. Burneston, but without any of the pretty deftness usually as much a part of her as her pink and white face was. The quiet dignity and stately grace of her visitor completely took away her wits.

"How is your grandmother, Rose? Is she at home?" Doris spoke graciously, but she too felt a strange shyness creeping over her. Now that she was face to face with the offender she scarcely knew how to speak of the offence.

"She's at home." Rose had nearly said "ma'am" in her fluttered surprise. "But for two weeks or so she's been ill in bed, and t' doctor says she'd best keep there, she's stiff all on one side."

Doris knew little of illness and had a shrinking

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from nursing, but it seemed to her that this was a case which called for her aid.

"Does Mr. Spencer know?" she said; "he always tells me about sickness in the village, and he has said nothing about your grandmother. I will send up some jelly and beef-tea;

but you ought to let Mr. Spencer know, he would call and see her, or Mrs. Riccall would."

Doris's voice had been more natural in these last words, and the tone seemed to Rose to bridge the chasm which separated her from her old acquaintance. Her courage came back.

"Thank you, Mrs. Burneston, but—" she tossed her fair head,—"there's time enough, an' maybe gran'mother's in no hurry to see t' vicar. She couldn't heer a word he said—nor no one else, as to that."

Doris looked severe; her merciful intentions towards Rose were checked by this pertness.

"Rose," she said gravely, "I will not go up and see your grandmother to-day, but I want to speak to you about something: I want to caution you. I am told that young Mr. Burneston comes to see you, you must not encourage

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his visits. You—" she hesitated, "you will get talked about."

There was a pause. Rose sat quite still, but stripes of bright colour flew across her throat and face; she quivered and throbbed with passion, and yet clenched her plump fists to keep in any expression of it; her sharp wits even then told her to mind what she said. Doris waited anxiously for her answer.

"Thank you, I'm sure," said Rose at last, with contemptuous emphasis, and getting up from her chair, "for being so very thoughtful over me, Mrs. Burneston. Your interest has waked up sudden, hasn't if? I thought you'd forgotten there was such a person as me living; but I fancy I'm equal to take care of myself, come what may; I've had to do it all along."

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Doris flushed under the girl's insolent glance.

"You are wrong," she said haughtily; "I give you this warning as a friend; I hoped that it might have been managed quietly, but perhaps I had better speak to your grandmother." She looked on to the door which shut out the ladder staircase leading to the room above.

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Rose moved quickly to the door, and set her back against it.

"You'll not see gran'mother wiv my leave, Mrs. Burneston, an' you'll find it none so easy to see her wivout. You may be mistriss at t' Hall, but you're not mistriss here. Why, Ah'm ashamed on you, Missis Burneston; if"—she grew deeply red, and she spoke in a loud, broad tone—"a lass do chat with a lad odd times, what harm's done, Ah'd like to know?"

"Yes"—Doris spoke with unusual eagerness, and her frown relaxed—"if it were a lad of your own class, Rose, I agree with you, though even then a girl should not flirt and get herself talked about. You have been always fond of admiration, but this is quite different; setting all other objections aside, you are injuring your own happiness in encouraging this acquaintance, and you know very well that you can end it at once if you choose."

Going up to the cottage Doris had resolved not to be over earnest, and not to provoke the girl's anger. She fancied that the shock of discovery would shame Rose, and that she

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would be ready to promise anything, and now she felt that she had made a false step in treating the matter so seriously.

Rose looked at her with a curling lip, and eyed her from head to foot with slow concentrated scorn.

"You'd best let me be," she said; "Ah've been trying to keep my tongue quiet, but it'll have its will, in spite of gran'mother, if you tice me on to't. You're a lady now, and Ah suppose have all you want, Mrs. Burneston, an amusement belike for every hour o' the day; but if you'd stayed just plain Doris Barugh, Ah'd like to ask, if you'd found a sudden pleasure come to your life without any seekin' of your own, if you'd hev cast it from you just because it didn't please some one who had no heart in her body to feel for your feelings?"

"Rose, hush! you forget yourself." Doris raised one hand reprovingly as to an angry child.

This was the spark the pent-in smouldering anger had wanted. Rose's arms fell suddenly straight, her pink fists doubled tighter than ever, this time in fury, not self-restraint, her

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eyes lightened in a sudden blaze, and her accent became broader still—

"You may think what you please, an' do what you please, but ye'll not come here doin' mistris ovver me, Doris Burneston. What sud yu, who hev given up father, mother, an' brother, fer money an' a grand hoose an' fine claise, know about what makes me happy or sad? Ah misdoobted yu yallays, an' when Ah looked on yur face on yur marriage mom, Ah knew what yu war doin'. Ah knew there was no love in yu; your heart was still an' clotcaud all thro'. Ah had serrowed fer yur father before, but then Ah serrowed fer yur husband. Why, fra' t' time Ah was that high"—she held her outspread hand level with her waist—"Ah worshipped t' ground he walked on, an' so wad onny lass who could love; there's few like him. An' now there's Ralph, his livin' image, an' he comes an' cheers up my dull sad life with a kind word an' a kind look, till Ah begins t' count t'

hoors till he comes again, an' lo! walks in you, madam, an' says, 'It isn't proper, Rose—you'll be talked of.' Talked of,

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posh!—wha's been mair talked of than yu yursel'? an' *yu* don't feel soiled with it; an' yet Ah'd hev mair pity an' less shame fer a lass 'at lost her name fer givin' her heart to a lad than Ah'd hev fer one with nae heart in her body, unless it's a heart full o' self. No—Ah'll say all Ah've gitten to say; an' yu needn't hush at me. Why, if yu knew hoo to love, yu'd not begin by telling me to take care o' myself; yu'd say harm might come to him. Not yu"—she shook her head vehemently—"yu never did think o' anyone's feelings but your own. Just t' same," she laughed angrily, "when George an' Ah wanted to play, yu war yallays thinkin' o' something else."

Disgust and surprise had kept Mrs. Burneston silent and still, but at this allusion to the days she hated a bright colour flew into her face, and she looked sternly at Rose.

"You seem to have lost your senses. Rose Duncombe," she said. "I cannot talk to you at all, but I shall find some other way of stopping this acquaintance."

She walked slowly to the door, opened it, and passed out into the road.

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Rose gasped once or twice, and then, clasping her hands over her face, she burst into passionate crying—such crying as Doris had never known. Shuddering sobs that made her whole body quiver as they came, and then hot streaming tears that fell through her fingers and wetted the front of her gown.

Suddenly she looked up, and pushed her hair off her swollen, disfigured face.

"Ah hate her, Ah deea, that's sure; but Ah've been a rare fool. How could Ah own up 'at Ah cared fer Ralph? an' then Ah promised gran'mother Ah'd never be unmenseful to Doris; but it's served her right, that it has. But still there's no good in it—it's like cutting off my nose to get revenge on my face; an' it's givin' t' proud stuck-up thing such a peg ovver me. What fer do Ah let my tongue run away so? Well," she began to dry up her tears, "no yan 'll be f wiser, that's yan comfort; nothing Ah said 'll see daylight, it 'll stick too much i' my lady's throat, except it's that bit about t' lad." She hid her hot face again. "Oh!" she moaned, "to say what Ah'm not

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sure o' just to flout her, to own Ah care fur a lad who has not said he loves me. An' Ah deean't love him—Ah only likes to see him. Whatever wad George say? Ah hevn't thought o' him thro' it all."

She burst into fresh tears. These lasted longer and fell more silently. Rose was conscious of a new feeling, or, to speak more truly, Doris's words had torn away the veil which the girl's careless vanity and love of admiration had wrapped round her inner feelings. Perhaps Rose had never felt so humble, so little absorbed in self, as in the hour after her visitor's departure.

"George said how 'twould be," she sighed very sadly; "he has said it over and over. 'Rose,' he said, 'if ye go on flirtin' about wiv t' lads t' day 'll come when ye'll be caught.' Why sud Ah care so much to see Maister Ralph? He only cares for me because there's no one else he cares to talk to—or who's so pretty as me. And if he did love me, where'd be t' use? he couldn't wed me, an' Ah wouldn't wed wiv him if he'd ask me. Ah'd be too proud to

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do what Doris did; an', besides, Ah sud die of it like a bird in a cage. She was always fit for a cage; she never was wild an' free. Ah had enough o' that cage work when Ah was teachin'. No, it can do Ralph no harm, an' me none either. Ah won't turn my back on him an' let him think Ah don't care for him, just to please her—so there noo!"

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CHAPTER V. LEAST SAID SOONEST MENDED

DORIS walked quickly back to the Hall. Certainly she had never been so angry since the days of her childhood.

In some ways her nature was too large to wince under Rose's personal taunts, as a more sensitive, more delicately strung temperament might have winced. She had made up her mind that Rose would be vexed, and probably would vent her vexation by pertness and rudeness, though she had not known how stinging this rudeness would prove. The point that so angered her was Rose's flat disobedience to her will. One of her own villagers! A mere dependant on her husband's goodness!—for

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she knew that Mr. Burneston took no rent for the stone cottages. It seemed to Doris in her indignation that her slightest wish should have been law to the vain, rebellious girl.

But with the evidence of anger grew a consciousness that she was angry, and Doris yielded herself up, and tried not to think, not to make any resolves till the mental storm had passed over.

"What a temper mine is," she said to herself, as she drew near the Hall. "I did not think it was so strong."

A regret, a rare feeling with Doris, rose and troubled the lull which was slowly falling on her anger. If she had put in practice towards Rose some of the lessons of worldly wisdom learned in her close study of others during her stay in London, and in intercourse with country neighbours, she would not have failed so entirely to-day.

"That girl is so wretchedly vain," she thought, "that if I had forced myself to notice and call on her sometimes she would have probably yielded to my influence, and I might

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have done what I pleased with her by this time." She remembered again, with some bitterness of regret, that her husband had said, in the early days of their marriage, "If you choose, you may be of the greatest possible service to Rose Duncombe."

But, besides all this, there was something quite different; there was a weight, and beneath that weight a soreness at Doris's heart. It was galling to feel in herself a want, and to feel, too, that one so completely her inferior as Rose Duncombe, possessed the quality she lacked. What was it that glowed in Rose's eyes, and trembled in her voice, when she spoke of giving up all for the happiness of another?

If Doris had been older, she might have consoled herself with the conviction that her passions were more under control than Rose's were, and that she would never so betray her feelings. But, as has been said, Doris had read few novels, and at school had never talked intimately with any girl besides Rika Masham. And, moreover, forty years ago, novels painted life more from the outside of human nature than

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from the inside, and were, in consequence, healthier, though less mentally instructive, than they are now, when, in some of the books we read, human hearts are put under a microscope, and treated like plants and insects.

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Besides the look on Rose's face, her words had conveyed to Dons the knowledge of a feeling—a knowledge that some months ago might not have aroused attention, but love had begun in Doris's heart beside her baby's cradle—that true love which is content to give itself without counting on return;

She walked along, her eyes fixed on the ground, her trouble and puzzle getting more tangled and increasing the soreness she felt. Could she then be more happy than she was? She knew that her life had its troubles; but these had been caused partly by the fact of Ralph's existence—a trouble which she never let herself dwell on—and by the avoidance and petty slights offered her by certain country neighbours; and this was a trouble which only curled her lip with scorn, so confident was she in the ultimate triumph of her influence, when what she

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considered her worldly education should be complete.

All at once she looked up, and saw her husband coming with his dogs along the avenue.

Even at a distance she knew that he had perceived her, and was hurrying eagerly to meet her.

"Yes," she said sorrowfully, "I suppose his love for me is passionate like Rose's. Why cannot I return it equally? But, then, I am not sure that women need, or ought to love in that way. I am sure I could never like anyone better than I like Philip, and I have baby to share my love with."

And yet, instead of the feeling of exquisite relief—the feeling akin to that which a draught of cold water gives to parching thirst—when a perplexing doubt is solved, or a light thrown on some difficult undertaking—this answer did not satisfy Doris; the soreness at her heart increased as she approached her husband. Would it have been different, she thought, if she had been Mr. Burneston's equal, and they

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had met and loved when he was younger, and if his wooing had been done in less set fashion? Next moment she rebuked her own idle folly.

"It is against common sense to dream of what could never have happened. The only thing that could have happened differently would have been that I might have grown up at Church Farm and married—well, say Ephraim Crewe,"—she gave a shudder of disgust—"No." A proud and more contented expression rose on her face. "For all the joy that the feeling could give, I would not give up my position for any power of loving, and Philip is quite satisfied, I think. I am not sure that he would wish for any change in me."

Her husband had come up to her; she stopped and smiled at him.

"Where have you been, darling?" He took her hand, drew it tenderly within his arm, and then turned back again towards the Hall. "I have been studying your face as you came along, and you really looked oppressed with care and woe. I don't think I ever saw you

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look so troubled before, my darling. What is it? tell me, Doris."

The strong loving tenderness in his voice troubled her; and in this moment of awakened self-consciousness she knew that she shrank from it as she had never shrank before; not because she disliked it—she felt it to be due to her as a wife; but her natural pride made her shrink from receiving that which she could not return, and Doris could not feign.

It was a relief that she had a real reason to give for her troubled face. The idea of a state of perfect union and thorough interchange of thought and feeling had not been

conceived by Doris. She would have shrunk indignantly from deceit; but thorough confidence with her husband was quite beyond her grasp.

She grew very serious while she answered.

"I was coming to tell you, Philip. I had hoped"—she looked up at him with the direct truthful look that had so mastered him when he met her in Steersdale—"that I might have saved you the worry of knowing; but as I have

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failed, it seems to me best to tell you and leave you to judge."

Mr. Burneston smiled at her earnestness, and Doris flushed. She felt that if he did not consider Ralph very wrong indeed she should be angry.

"I have been in the village;" she spoke more quickly than usual, "I have been up to see and to warn Rose Duncombe, who has been very foolish. I have been told that something very wrong has been happening, Ralph goes and talks to her of an evening, and I did not want you to be worried about it"

Mr. Burneston looked puzzled, and then he smiled.

"You are a wonderful creature," he said. But Doris reddened; she was not quite sure how much of his praise was real or how much of it a playful mockery of her earnestness, for this gentle banter was the only reproof her husband ever administered. "You are playing mother in earnest; it is very good of you, and very tiresome of Ralph, my darling," he said more seriously, as he read the trouble in her eyes.

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"Well, how was your lecture received, and what does naughty, pretty Rose say for herself?"

"She is very headstrong, she behaved as badly as possible, and—" She felt that her tongue was going at a most unusual pace, and checked herself.

"She is a silly little girl," Mr. Burneston said cheerfully. "However, there can be no great harm done, I fancy. A girl at Rose's age is far too old to care for Ralph, and I suppose boys will be boys, eh, Doris? and will talk to a pretty girl sometimes."

"I can't bear to see you so cool about it, Philip," she said bluntly, for he had begun to whistle softly to himself. "I call such a thing disgraceful. I'm sure Rose thinks a great deal too much about him."

"Indeed! Poor little girl; that's a pity." The squire looked serious and left off whistling. Doris had never spoken to him in such a decided tone; he felt roused from his easy life of happiness to consider this subject more gravely.

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"Ralph is dull, poor fellow!" he said; "and I daresay Rose is amusing to talk to. Your brother George found her so, I know." Then another pleasant smile crossed his face. "Perhaps it vexes you, dear, that Ralph should talk to George's sweetheart?"

Doris's anger was getting beyond her mastery.

"I have never spoken to you about this" she said proudly, "because it pains me so much. I cannot—I will not—believe that George really cares for such a person as Rose Duncombe. No! if I did not think of the harm to Ralph I should let this acquaintance go on; it might cure George of such a silly infatuation, and then he would have eyes for Rika."

The sudden change in her husband's face startled Doris. He looked utterly bewildered.

"My dear child," he said, "you talk as if love went for nothing, or as if it could be made to grow like a cabbage. If your brother loves Rose, and I think he does, he won't give

her up lightly. And I don’t mean to vex you, darling. Rose will suit George much better than Miss Masham would.”

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Doris crimsoned till she felt almost suffocated. They were close to the Hall now, and she stood still before she answered.

“I understand you; you mean that I forget the difference of their positions; perhaps that is not my fault,” she said in a pained, humbled voice. “There is far less difference between George and Rika than there was between you and me.”

It was the first time she had so spoken, and Mr. Burneston grew as rosy as a girl would have done.

“My dear child, do not say such things; you must not compare yourself with anyone; you are worthy any man; you are beyond all rules.” Doris thought she had never heard him speak with so much dignity. “If Rose Buncombe were like you, I should hold Ralph completely justified; as it is, you are right, and I will put a stop to this business.”

He took her hand and pressed it fondly. Then they walked on in silence. Doris wished that, as she had said so much, she had said a few other things which often rose to her lips.

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while her husband wished the whole talk unspoken, and tried to forget that his wife had lost her temper with him.

They did not meet again till just before dinner. Then Mr. Burneston, instead of meeting Doris, as he usually did, at the door of her dressing-room, knocked and went in.

"I am going to talk to Ralph, and settle this business," he said, smiling, "so do not expect to see me for some time after dinner." His easy cheerful manner vexed Doris.

"But you will speak to him, dear, most seriously, will you not?"—her voice getting stiff and hard with the struggle of her feelings—"I do not know much about boys, perhaps, but this conduct seems to me, at Ralph's age, simply disgraceful."

Mr. Burneston laughed.

"My darling, you are making too much of it. You are only a woman after all—you see things in an exaggerated way; there's really nothing to worry about."

"Worry! Oh! that's not the word, Philip." Doris had flushed deeply. "To me disgrace

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would cause a great deal more than worry. You know—you must know that Ralph's visits to Rose Duncombe will do her harm. Why, if a child of mine acted so, I should punish him severely. I should threaten to disinherit him—"

She stopped abruptly; the words had come without her will.

He looked at her a moment; then he put his arm round her and kissed her forehead.

"You are tired, dear," he said, "and you want your dinner. Don't you know that I couldn't disinherit Ralph, even if I wished to do it? I am only a life tenant here; he must be master of Burneston. Now, come along, we are keeping dinner."

This was Mr. Burneston's way of "settling the business" after dinner, when he and Ralph were left alone.

"Do you still wish to go to Paris as much as you did last year, old fellow?" he said kindly.

Ralph's eyes brightened at once.

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“I should just fancy I did. Why do you ask?” he said eagerly.

“I fancy Gilbert Raine is going abroad for a short time, and if you like you can go with him; that is to say, if you are willing to start for Austin’s End to-morrow.”

Ralph had flushed with eagerness. His two special school chums had seen Paris and many other foreign towns, and he felt himself an ignoramus beside them. One of his great home grievances was that his father had taken Doris abroad, and that he had never been asked to go with him in his previous journeys.

“All right, father; thank you,” he said. “I’ll go and find Faith, and tell her to have my things put up. The coach leaves Steersley at ten, doesn’t it?”

He ran off in an excited bustle, while Mr. Burneston lay back in his chair and thought,

“That will settle the matter; how very true is the old proverb, ‘Least said soonest mended.’ ”

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CHAPTER VI. RIKA MASHAM

IT had rained heavily all night, so heavily that from the windows of Burneston Hall that looked across the river the landscape had a forlorn, soaked aspect; the leaves drooped, and the roses near the house had been scattered in pink fragments on the brown moist earth by the violent pelting of so many hours. But the sun was now asserting himself, and driving the lingering clouds out of sight; and along the lane seen in the foreground of the landscape the little flowers, white and blue and yellow, were opening their bosoms widely to the warmth, though drops still glittered on the fragile speedwell blossoms and on

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white starry stichwort nestling under the hedges.

Everything wore a brightened, renovated aspect, except the battered roses and a plot of balsams beneath Doris's window. The violence of the rain had strown the rich dark mould with pink and white and scarlet blossoms.

Doris looked radiant, too, with happy expectation.

"You have not looked so young since you married," her husband said. "I believe you are far more excited at the idea of seeing Miss Masham than you were on your wedding-day."

Doris smiled at him.

"I suppose it does make me feel young to think of Rika—it takes me back to school life," she said, with brightening eyes; "but then what a child I was in those days!"

She gave a little sigh, and a pensive look stealing over her face made her in her watching husband's eyes lovelier than ever. He had a way of quietly studying her face—learning by

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heart its marvellous delicacy both of skin and feature. Usually it betrayed little emotion; but to-day, in this high-strung mood of expectation, a faint pink colour came and went on her clear skin, and her deep grey-blue eyes looked moist with happiness, almost like the speedwell beneath the hedge across the river.

Doris felt strangely fluttered as Rika's arrival drew near—nervously anxious that all should be thoroughly well ordered. She had never forgotten the suffering she had gone

through when Rika arrived at the cottage at Steersley. She wanted her friend to realise how completely that bit of her existence had been an episode.

And besides the pleasure of seeing Rika and renewing the old intimacy which had begun to lessen in their letters, Doris hailed her visit on another account—she meant to take her to the Cairn. She knew that her father was deeply hurt by her long delay, and that her mother pined to see the baby; but neither of these reasons could have induced Doris to take a maid with her to the Cairn, and she knew that

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her husband would not allow her to go alone. She did not wish him to go with her: he would be a restraint on the others, and it would be a trial to her to let him see their homely ways; but now that the Cairn was not her own home, she thought that she could take Rika there without mortification.

"I do not fancy," she said, with a slight curl of her delicate lip, "that in a poor parsonage, where there are five boys and an invalid mother, the ways can be so very refined. When I first knew Rika I knew no one else; she may seem different now."

It was afternoon when Mr. Burneston said to his wife, "There she is," as loud barking among the dogs announced an arrival.

Doris followed him down the broad darkening stairs, and she thought of the difference between Rika, driven by George in the dog-cart, and Rika as she saw her now through the open hall door being helped out of the luxuriously-cushioned carriage by Mr. Burneston.

But Rika seemed shy and quiet, and was not

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laughing and chattering as she had laughed and chattered with George at Steersley. When she saw Doris the change was magical. She flew at her and gave her a long intense kiss, that made Mrs. Burneston's heart thrill with strange pleasure; but having done this, Rika reddened, and looking half ashamed, let Doris go and said,

"How's baby?—may I see him?"

Doris was delighted.

"We will go and see him at once," she said; "you shall have some tea in the nursery."

"I see you also will be offered up to the idol," said Mr. Burneston laughing. "I warn you that Doris sacrifices us all without the slightest compunction to this new deity."

Rika stopped when she reached the staircase. "Oh, I forgot," she turned back eagerly. "There's something for you in that basket, Doris. I've left it in the carriage, but it's a King Charles—father said it was thrown away upon us, and so I brought it to you." Mr. Burneston went back for the basket—when it was opened, a black silken head, with large liquid luminous

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dark eyes and a turn-up nose, appeared, wistful and trembling.

"What a dear quaint little face!" said Doris. "How very kind of you! What do you call him?"

"Jumbo—descended straight from the famous Mumbo Jumbo," Rika said, so gravely that her friend laughed.

The young girl felt rather awed by the size and grandeur of the house. It seemed to her, too, that Doris had grown years older since their last parting; but when she saw her with her baby in her arms, she thought she had grown more loveable—there was such a deep tenderness in the eyes bent on little Phil.

"Isn't he a darling?" Doris said.

As she looked up her eyes met Rika's earnest gaze.

"Well?" and the young mother laughed. Rika leaned over and kissed her.

"He is like his mother. I am so glad to be here, dear; it seems years since that wedding day. I have pictured you many ways, but I never realised you as a mother, Doris, and just

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now I could have fancied you my own mother looking at Algy."

Doris flushed; the old dislike to showing her feelings was as strong in her as ever.

"Will you come to your room?" she said after a little; "I think you must Avant to rest before dinner after such a long journey. Jane, one of baby's maids, will take out your things if you will give her your keys."

Rika laughed.

"Thank you; you remember my habits, I see; but indeed I have almost left off dreaming, and am growing punctual and methodical. I was going to say I have so much to do, but," raising her large bright eyes to her friend's face with admiring reverence, "I suppose you are so much busier that you would simply laugh at what I call 'much.' "

They had reached a pretty room at the end of the gallery, and found Jane waiting, and the boxes already placed in the adjoining dressing-room. Doris held out her hand for her friend's keys, and then, closing the door on Jane and her

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labours, she seated herself in an arm-chair, and pointed to another.

“Come and sit down, dear,” she said, for Rika had gone to the window, and was hanging out of it, exclaiming at the extent of the view. “Let us have a little talk now, and then I will leave you to rest.”

Rika came and seated herself beside her friend.

“You think my life is so busy.” Doris smiled sweetly at her friend; she felt strangely happy. “No. I expect your life is much busier than mine is. Till baby came I had really nothing to do—I mean besides music and reading, and so on.”

Rika’s eyes and mouth opened in wide wonder.

“Why, I thought you said your rector had no wife! Who looks after your school-mistress and school-children, and old people, and sick, and all the rest?”

Doris flushed.

“Yes,” she said gravely; “I know what you mean. At Pelican House I meant to do so many things when I never dreamed of having

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so much power; and yet perhaps it is the very circumstance of having the power that makes my way so difficult. I try to see after all the sick, especially those that are poor, but I do this chiefly through the housekeeper; as yet I have not begun any of my own plans—there are difficulties.—You know what I mean,” she said abruptly. She had thought to be quite frank with her old school-fellow, but somehow she could not go back to the mention of that early life at the Church Farm as easily as she had thought. Rika was altered. She seemed so much older, and there was a thoughtful tenderness in her eyes which was strange to Doris. She could not yet summon up the old power which she used to possess over her impulsive friend.

"You mean"—Rika smiled so sweetly that Doris's heart went out to her—"that one cannot do all one likes at once; that is the very lesson my father has been preaching to me ever since I left Pelican House. Oh, what have I said! a thing 1 don't mean at all. My father never preaches to me, but his practice has been

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showing me how very little I can really do of all my grand imaginings, and how much better it is to do one thing thoroughly than to try at three or four, and only half finish them all; but you would never have wanted that teaching, you old darling—you were always so calm and so thorough."

She took Doris's hand and pressed it warmly—these two friends had never indulged in many kisses

"I am not sure"—Doris still looked grave—"whether after all you have not been doing while I have only been thinking. I must get you to tell me about some of your work, though I suppose I shall have plenty to do now in taking care of little Phil."

Rika laughed.

"But I have come here for a holiday, you dear old thing!—I am not going to teach you to work—oh, I am so happy, I must give you a kiss," she said, kissing her warmly. "I feel actually wild with happiness at having you again to talk to. I suppose the husband will not allow me much of you all to myself; but

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he does not look tyrannical—rather sweet, I think; and yet I never trust looks in men. I don't believe in any of them, except my father and your brother George, and he is a myth at present. You see that visit last year was such a lightning-flash kind of event

there was no realising anything. I seemed to eat, drink, and sleep wedding preparations and wedding from the day I arrived till the day I departed. Oh, what fun it was!"

"Yes, it was all very hurried." Doris smiled as her friend's natural way of speaking broke through the shyness and reserve she had felt at first. "But you would believe in my father too if you knew him; he is a plain, simple man, but he is so true. You will learn to know him at the Cairn."

"Yes"—Rika looked delighted—"I am so looking forward to the happiness of that visit. Why ever should you have doubted my willingness to go there with you?"

Their eyes met in a long earnest gaze. It is all very well to talk of frankness and heart-to-heart communion, and doubtless there are hearts

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made one in marriage, or, in the case of sisters, every thought is sometimes shared—nay, even the embryo thought of doubt may grow into existence simultaneously in two souls only divided by the separate bodies in which each soul dwells; but these are rare privileges, and most of us have to carry with us alone through our life's journey thoughts and feelings which are either too high or too low to be shared by our dearest companions. We must bear our burden, so far as human sympathy goes, alone; and perhaps we may find hereafter that those whose cup of human love and sympathy seems fullest on earth—whose lives form the most of oneness with some fellow-being, will be farthest removed in the endless life from the Great Sympathizer, the never-absent bosom friend of all who have loved Him here.

It had seemed to Doris that the crowd of stifled, pent-up thoughts and doubts which she had borne unshared since she left Pelican House, would find release when Rika came to Burneston, and now face to face with her friend she could not force her tongue to say why she

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shrank from the Cairn, and why she feared that Rika, too, might shrink from it. She did not know how this trouble which so burdened her proud spirit looked out now at "the windows of her soul," and was comprehended and pitied by the warm sympathy of her friend.

Rika's colour deepened, but she only said,

"When are we to go to the Cairn, Doris? Dear me! that sounds rude, as if I wanted to leave this place; but you understand, don't you? I think it will be delightful to roam about on the moor; it is so very kind of Mrs. Barugh to make room for me."

A look of decided relief spread over Mrs. Burneston's fair troubled face.

"If you had come yesterday," she said, "I should have told you our plans were not decided, as I did not want to leave my husband all alone, but now we can go any day, as he expects a friend at the end of the week. It is that Mr. Raine, Rika. I told you about him; do you remember?"

"I should think I do—a sort of human archæological

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construction—a very disagreeable person he must be. I hope we shall go before he comes. I must always hate that man for refusing to be at your wedding, and if I saw him I might have to like him against my principles."

"We shall certainly start before he arrives," said Doris thoughtfully. "We may expect cold weather any day at this season, and it would not do for baby to travel in cold weather. I do not think you would like Mr. Raine; he is certainly eccentric. I like him

now very much, but I did not at first; you and he are too much alike to be great friends. Now I really am going to let you rest."

But instead of resting, Rika, as soon as she was alone, went to the window. She was so full of the tumult of enjoyment which new and pleasant surroundings are apt to create in imaginative and impressionable beings that she seemed scarcely able to contain the gladness of her ecstasy as she gazed at the broad landscape beyond the river, with its hedge-bordered fields and distant stretches of moorland overtopped by those far-away and softened blue hills, so

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lofty that they made those in front of them quite dwarfed and puny, though these glowed with yellow and vivid green here and there, as if they strove by colour to compensate for lack of size.

Rika sighed—not from envy, though at home she could never escape the sight of chimneys, as her father's parsonage lay on the outskirts of a manufacturing town—but from the delight which the very sense of space gave her. It seemed as if she grew full of rest while she gazed at the large calm English scene—a scene that might be found in many other places, so still and yet so full of hints of life. The green meadows were dotted with brown cows, and in the meadow across the river fat geese were eating grass.

"After all," the girl thought, "a view like this teaches the use of common-place beauty. There is nothing special here, unless it is the great extent of view and that brown line, which makes me dream of a wild, seldom-trodden moor, with perhaps after all a high road across it," she said, with a smile at herself; "and yet the very

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sight of it all has made me feel ever so quietly happy. Doris must lead a happy life here."

Her eyes fell on the river that ran below Doris's window, for Mrs. Burneston's room was in one of the projecting wings of the building, and here only a small strip of lawn bordered the terrace wall. The rain had swollen the stream, and it ran by, in a swift, dark current, to the arches of the bridge, dashing noisily against the piers. It had grown dark quickly, and Rika shivered as she watched the strong, dark water.

"And yet," she said, "I like the river better than that view beyond. There is life and motion in it, and mystery besides; it seems as if it might be full of weird secrets; there is nothing tame about it. I am not sure that 1 could live on always looking at those immoveable fields and hills, with only the varying crops by way of change, but then Doris has her husband to live for; she does not care what sort of view this is."

She stopped here to think. Rika was not sure that a husband would be as satisfactory to

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work for as a father, and mother, and four brothers were. It seemed to her that there could be nothing to do for the master of Burneston. She laughed again at herself.

"I am so absurd," she said, "so full of wild, dreamy notions, and yet in practice so very hum-drum and ignoble. What a good thing it is for me that I must mend stockings and teach Algy Latin! I should perhaps carry my absurdities into action if I could get time even to think of myself at home. I wonder if Doris is quite perfectly happy?—her husband is rather old for her; and yet I don't know, it must be much better in every way to have a husband much wiser than oneself, and I fancy wisdom only comes with years and experience of life. I should not like a husband less wise than papa is."

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CHAPTER VII. MATCH-MAKING

DORIS liked the Cairn. There was a breadth about the wild, lonely place that could not be frittered away in Mrs. Barugh's small attempt at "genteel" decoration.

The floor of the large, low, heavy-beamed sitting-room was not nearly covered by her smart Brussels carpet; this was placed in front of the wide hearth, and as the broad latticed window with its seat below was on the same side as the fireplace, though at the other end of the room, very little daylight reached the carpet, already hidden by a heavy square table.

The last tenant of the farm-house, an old bachelor, had left all his old cumbrous furniture to be taken with the house, and John Barugh

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had peremptorily decided to keep these chairs and tables in their places. He said his wife's "gimcracks"—so he called poor Dorothy's attempt at modern upholstery—were more suited to bedchambers.

The old faded chintz window-curtains, too, were far more in harmony with the wild moor outside than were Mrs. Barugh's white muslin draperies upstairs; and on the square table Dorothy kept an old china bowl filled with dahlias, the last bits of colour that lingered in the narrow garden outside on the evening of Doris's arrival.

As they drove up to the house she thought her mother must sorely miss the charming old garden of Church Farm. The former tenants of the Cairn had seemingly so loved its desolate, weird aspect that they had been unwilling to divide the house from the moor by more than a narrow strip of mould surrounded by a holly-hedge. There was not even a climbing shrub against the dark stone walls. But there was her mother at the door, her face full of eager delight, and when Dorothy had set eyes

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on her grandson, she pushed forward, and took him out of the carriage, and then kissed him till George called out laughing that the baby would be stifled.

John came forward, proud and pleased to see his grandchild, but his face was troubled as he kissed Doris.

“Bless thee, lass,” he said, “an’ bless t’ bairn; nobbut Ah thowt yu wad nut hev cum.”

Doris looked at him with a sweet, shy seriousness.

“Indeed I have wanted to come, father, but there has been so much to prevent it.” The sound of her voice thrilled through John Barugh; his lips quivered, and he turned away abruptly.

As soon as they reached the parlour Doris took the baby from Mrs. Barugh’s unwilling arms, and held it up to her father.

The big red-whiskered man bent down and scanned tenderly, yet with a kind of awe, the little sleeping creature that lay in its white wrappings, quite undisturbed by its changed surroundings.

“You’ll kiss him, won’t you, father?” There

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was a pleading in her voice; never before had she seen clearly how her neglect must have pained her father. Softly, so that no one could hear but John, she said, “He shall learn to love you dearly; you may be sure of it.”

John kissed the child heartily, and again he turned away suddenly; he put his broad hand on his child’s shoulder, but he could not find anything to say.

"Come, come, father. Doris is not used to holding the child, she'll be faint." Dorothy took the little bundle, and carrying it upstairs, she seated herself before the blazing logs in Doris's bed-room, and, with the baby in her lap, warmed its feet and legs at the fire. "It's the very image of the squire, that 'tis; yes, you are, you bonnie boy, and as like your own mother as two peas, bless it!" Here she buried her face in the infant, and the rest of a long sentence of endearing words became inaudible.

Rika made George laugh heartily with an account of their journey. They had travelled post as far as the town in the valley below, and there they had parted from Jane the nursemaid, who was to return to Burneston in the carriage,

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while they drove to the Cairn in a hired fly; and Rika declared that Doris had been more solicitous about her baby's comfort than her own mother had been about her six children put together.

"You should have seen her face," she said, "when I took baby from Jane; there was positive terror in it, and I know she has been feeling his arms and legs ever since, to make sure I didn't break something. I know she thinks that child's made of egg-shell china."

"He's the first," said George; "you don't know but what Mrs. Masham made a fine fuss about you."

On that evening, and through the days that followed, for Doris kept her promise, and stayed a week at the Cairn, it seemed, by some natural order, that she was always her father's companion, while Rika went with George. Mrs. Barugh was too much absorbed in the baby, and in directing the little extra maid she had hired to attend it, to need any other companion, so that, except at meal-times, they saw little of her.

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Very little talk passed between the father and daughter in their walks; they seemed to have gone back six or seven years, sauntering round the farm and over the moor in the silent companionship that had once made them so happy; it was a truly blessed time to the father, though now, instead of the serene, idleminded content John had been used to feel, he found himself wondering now and then whether such plain talk as his suited Doris, or whether he did not weary her; while she, after the first novelty was over, used to let her mind wander as it had wandered years ago, with this difference that formerly she dreamed a future out of chaos, and now she was often lost in retrospect, or in planning realities likely to happen. She could not bring herself to ask the question she longed to put about the future of her child, and yet she felt that her father was the only person to whom she could talk on this subject.

One great part of her reveries related to George and Rika. Every day there seemed more talk between these two, and shouts of laughter told how merry their talk was; they appeared always glad to be together. The

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only point that disturbed Doris was this mirth; she remembered that when George was in love with Rose he had been so dreamy and serious.

“But then I never saw him alone with Rose in this way. Rika and he must care for one another after a time, they’ll learn to do so. Why, I did not care for Philip at first. Liking grows in these cases, I fancy.”

Doris had to struggle with herself at this, to stamp down a conviction that there was a higher and more mystical feeling between lovers, of which she knew nothing; but her belief in this idea was so vague that she would have considered it morbid to allow thought to dwell on it consciously, especially as the only time that she had allowed herself to consider it, she had felt disturbed and unhappy.

"Father," she said one day, near the end of her visit, "how do you like Miss Masham?"

John had been walking beside her as they toiled up to the Cairn from the farm below; he had been busy showing Doris some new fields which he had lately purchased, and which were to be sown with clover, and she had been listening so attentively to his agricultural projects

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that he had been led into far more talk than usual. This seemingly irrelevant question startled him. He looked at his daughter curiously; his own mind, slow to move from one subject to another, could not yet grasp the connection which had helped her so quickly from clover to her friend.

"Eh, well, Ah've not thowt on it; sheea's yur frien', Doris, and that war enow for mey; bud sheea's a bonny lass, an' sheea's fair set on yu, Doris. Sheea's yalays efter yu an' wantin' yu. Ah notes that mitch."

"Don't you think she and George seem to like one another?"

John's eyebrows met in the puzzle created by her question, and his mouth screwed itself very round as he stared at her for explanation.

"Well?" he said at last, seeing that she waited for his answer.

Doris grew confused under that broad, unconscious gaze. Why should not this idea have come to her father?

"I mean," she said, "that they suit one another very well. I should like Rika for a sister if you would like her for a daughter."

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John stopped abruptly in his walk. The thick red eyebrows rose suddenly, producing a series of crimson wrinkles something like a curved reed-moulding, while John's mouth opened as wide as the Dominie's did for "Prodigious," only instead of the adjective came an explosion of hearty laughter, which sorely discomfited Mrs. Burneston.

"Zookerins, lass! bud mebbe ye're reckonin' ower fast. George is nut t' lad tu tak a wahfe becos yu an' mey bid him wed, he's a steadfast lad is George."

Doris reddened.

"I didn't mean that, father, but I think they are taking to one another. And I want to know whether you would not like such a marriage."

John sighed.

A memory came back with Doris's words of his talk with her about her own engagement. He thought she was more dutifully inclined about George's marriage than she had been about her own.

"Ye're iv ower mitch uv a hurry, lass; George is nut yan tu change yeeasily, an' he's

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cared fer Rose Buncombe ivver sin' he war a bit uv a lad."

"But, father," Doris spoke eagerly, at that moment she hated Rose, all her dislike for her came back, "you would not like Rose for a daughter. She is—she is not a fit girl for George to marry, indeed she is not."

Again John was puzzled, but he smiled down at her in the superior wisdom of simplicity.

"Ah deean't reeghtly gaum yu, bud seeams tu mey, lass, weddins cannot be made as yu wad mak 'em. If a lad an' a lass is made yan, theer mun be summat tu draw 'em

thegither, an' Ah cann't think theer's onny mair then likin' atweens yon lass an' George, an' likin's nut eneeaf tu wed on, mahnd ye that, Doris lass.—Hollau!"

This was addressed to a strayed sheep which had found its way through some gap in the fence of a turnip-field, and without a word more John strode off to remove the intruder, quite unconscious of the blow he had dealt his daughter.

But she soon recovered herself. She dearly loved her father; but this visit had shown her

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that he and she must from necessity judge from different points, and she tried to heal the pain he had just given her by this anodyne.

"I fancy love must wear different aspects in different classes. Apart from other things, in a worldly point of view, it would be a good thing for Rika to marry George. Charming as she is she has little chance of marrying. Her father is evidently very poor, and has four boys to place in life, and my father has saved a good deal, I know, and of course George can have it all. With Rika's notions about rank and society she would not consider the marriage unequal, and it will make me so very happy to have such a sister. Oh yes, it must be."

John came back redder in the face, but showing no other sign of his run after the delinquent sheep.

"Yu mun send t' lahtle lad oop tu t' Cairn when he's big eneeaf," he said, "an' Ah'll larn him hoo tu tent t' stock an' sike lahke; t' squire wad be fain tu ken mair farming than he diz, bud he wasn't reeghtly schealed; an' t' parson's wrang yal tugither thof he thinks he kens mair an' Ah diz."

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Doris looked thoughtful.

"Thank you, father, it's very kind of you, and in any case it would be useful knowledge; but I suppose my boy will not have any laud or stock of his own to manage, unless—unless anything happens to Ralph Burneston." She spoke calmly, and looked hard at her father.

"God forbid!" the farmer said hastily. "Whya, mah lass. Ah telt ye afore yu married aboot t' dowment 'at's made on ye an' on onny bairns 'at yu may hev. Theer's a conny pleeace wi' a farm belangin', at Loughton, 'at 'll come round tu ye; t' squire sayd 'at he bowt it oot o' some shares 'at turned oot better then he leaked fer, sae that's nowt tu deea wi' Ralph Burneston; bud that's a poor lathle scufflin' bit ov a pleeace, nae chance o' keepin' stock ur growin' owt i' siken a stany corner. Theer's twenty yaccres mebbe, bud 'twad deea fer yu, Doris, nobbut yu war left tu feud fer yersel'."

He sighed. Once he had thought that, if she were left a widow, Doris might perhaps come home again. Now he saw this was impossible.

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"Yes, I remember," she said slowly, "but I am not thinking about myself. Does it not seem very hard, father, that one son, just because he happens to be born first, should have all, and the other should have nothing, and have to earn his own living in a profession?"

John's shaggy eyebrows lifted in wonder.

"Woonkers! Doris lass, yu mun be dreeamin' it's t' law o' t' land, an' hes been t' law tahme oot o' mahnd, yu kenned it yal afore yu war married, sae there's nae help fer it; an' tu mah thinkin' t' lad 'at warks fer his livin' 's t' happiest, t' tahme dizn't drag wiv him, he's yalays wantin' mair on't then he's gitten."

"Yes"—but Doris sighed—it seemed to her that a high-minded, highly-cultured man, such a man as she meant to create in her little Philip, would always find plenty to do without being obliged to work for his living. Her husband had said he did not wish either of his sons to enter the army or the navy, and it seemed to Doris that those were the only two professions suited to a gentleman.

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CHAPTER VIII. ON THE HILL-TOP.

THE last day of the visit had come, and Doris still felt puzzled about George and Rika.

She did not know how to act. She dared not take her mother into confidence, she would immediately tell either Rika or George, perhaps both. But Doris feared to leave the matter undecided; she must at least get some insight into George's feelings, and yet private talks with George had been her great objection to visiting the Cairn.

Doris was not morbid, but like some other practical people she had been apt to realise too strongly, and to create bugbears for herself. She studied George attentively, asked his

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opinion on some points, and was so struck by the change in his temper that she began to smile at her own fear of a dispute.

"You and I have not had a walk together yet," she said, on the last day of her visit. "I want to see your wonderful hill that Rika is so enraptured with. She says it is a poem. It is a real pleasure to show her things; don't you think so?"

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“Ah!” George gave a sigh of pleasure, and Doris rejoiced. “Yes,” he added slowly, “she has a feeling for all that is really beautiful, an’ she’s a reeght merry lass.” He stopped as if he had checked some further words.

“She is quite made for a quiet country life,” Doris said. “Well then, suppose father and I go with you two this evening? or shall you and I go alone?”

George smiled. It was new to him that his sister should care for his company, but he thought there must be an improvement in many ways in Doris or she would not have come to the Cairn. He had not noticed any shrinking from the plain, homely ways of the

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farm-house, or even any impatience with his mother’s flow of talk; for Mrs. Barugh’s triumph of self-glorification in her daughter’s visit exhibited itself in a never-ending babble—now on the make of Doris’s gown, now on the perfections of the baby, and a constant analogy between him and Doris and George at the same age. She sometimes carried these recollections so far that George was forced to call her to order.

“Spare Miss Masham, mother,” he had more than once said, when he saw Rika striving vainly to check her laughter at these baby stories.

Rika was thoroughly happy.

“You are all simply delightful,” she said. “I never felt so much at home away from my own people. I never have to think what I shall say or what I shall do; you are so easy to please. And then these moors; I seem to breathe more freely on them than I’ve ever done. I had not dreamed of anything half so wild and grand.”

Mrs. Barugh bridled with pleasure. She

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had just laid the baby in his cradle, and so had a few moments to bestow on inferior beings.

"I'm sure we're all much obliged to you. Miss Masham, for your good opinion of us, and the place, and everything, and we'll be proud to see you any time you like, whether Doris can come or not—shan't we, George?—shan't us, father?"

Doris's eyes were fixed on George with tell-tale eagerness, and as he looked up from the collie nestling its pointed ears against his knee, he met her gaze, and wondered at its intensity. So wondering, he let the question slip on to his father.

But John did not answer at once with the heartiness usual to him when a welcome was required. He remembered his daughter's proposal, and he felt troubled. It seemed almost as if he should be lending himself to thwart George if he encouraged Miss Masham at the Cairn—but his hospitality conquered.

"Ay, marri," he said, with a smile that beautified his face by its genial breadth. "Ah's

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prood tu think 'at t' laady lahkes t' Cairn. Yu sud bide here i' t' cawd weather, when ther's bonny wutherment—t' winds cum' swoopin' an' sworlin' fra t' hills as if they'd lift t' thatch; nut 'at they dee 'at, bud ther's a tussle atween 'em fer it."

"I've asked George to take me up the hill to the Cairn this evening," said Doris; "will you come, Rika, or will you get father to show you some of his haunts beside the river? I don't believe you have seen the stepping-stones."

Rika's face brightened with delight.

"May I?—do you really mean it? It is too good to take a walk with me, and have you all to myself, Mr. Barugh. At least"—she stammered and reddened, conscious of the

surprise on Doris's face—"I don't mean any disrespect to you, Mr. George, but I so want to see all over the farm."

"After all," Doris thought, when she went upstairs to get a warm wrap, for George had warned her of the cold on the summit of the hill, "I don't think that counts for anything; the more she likes him the less she would own

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her liking, and she got very red just now."

The four started together for their walk. For some time they followed the yellow deeply-ridged cart-road skirting the moor that rose loftily on the left, bare except for knots of furze and tufts of heather on its rugged side; on the right, divided from the road by a dry grassed ditch, half filled with clumps of peat, was a hazel hedge, barred with stumps of pollard elms. This was the boundary of John Barugh's fields, which sloped down steeply to the road beside the river.

As they walked on, above the shoulder of the moor loomed two huge blocks of gritstone that seemed ready to fall on the heads of those who walked below.

"We must separate here." George pointed out to Doris how the road mounted and took a sweeping curve to the left, cutting sharply against the still blue sky. On the right, filling the gap made by the road in its sudden curve, came a lovely peep of the valley, some rich green trees near at hand standing out in bold relief from the vista of hills beyond—hills

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rising one behind another, the emerald tints of the meadows sinking into dimness as the mist rose from the valley.

John Barugh led the way to a gate on the right, and he and Rika were soon out of sight as they went down towards the river.

Then George and Doris slowly climbed the steep hill, and crossed the wide moor to the top of the glen, in which Joseph Sunley had waited.

“Will ye sit an’ rest here,” George said, “afore ye climbs again? I’m feared o’ wearyin’ ye, lass,” he added kindly.

“I do tire sooner than I did,” Doris smiled; “perhaps it is because I walk less.”

A year ago George would have said, “This is one of the evils of increased culture; women learn to depend on carriages and horses, and neglect bodily exercise,” but one of the most valuable lessons he had learned from the rector of Steersley had been to economise his opinions.

He had been waiting patiently for a quiet time, as he called it, with Doris. She had written him a few lines, saying that Ralph had left Burneston, but he longed for, and yet shrank

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from, an account of the interview he felt sure his sister must have had with Rose.

He looked at Doris; she seemed to be thinking deeply, and to have forgotten his presence. He pulled a tuft of heather, and flung it among the stones.

“Did ye see Rose?” he said nervously, as his movement roused Doris.

“Yes,, I saw her.” She sat upright on the stones, and looked straight on to the hills beyond.

"Well, lass?" Then, after a minute, he said sadly, "Maybe ye had words. Rose has a quick tongue, but her bark's ivver sae mitch worse than her bite, an' hard words break no bones, as t' old sayin' is—do they, Doris?"

Doris felt full of pity just now for George's infatuation, and yet she thought "he may only seek to excuse her for friendship's sake; he cannot put her and Rika in comparison, and still love Rose."

George watched her face anxiously, but Doris had learned to control its expression.

"Rose was very rude"—she tried to speak

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without bitterness—"but that is not the worst. I am sorry to say she gloried in Ralph's attention to her, and refused to give up seeing him."

George grew paler, but he did not answer hastily.

"She's not easy to manage. Rose isn't; an' in hot blood she'll say whatever comes in her head if she thinks onnybody's wishin' to thwart her—mebbe she had no meanin' in what she said; it was nobbut to fret you, lass. You an' her nivver drawed ovver well together."

Doris raised her head proudly. An allusion to her early knowledge of Rose seemed always to set the blood rushing hotly through her body; it flamed angrily now on her cheeks, and George saw it. He rose up from his stony seat.

"Dunnut vex yoursel'," he said gently. "I doesn't think of Rose as you do, but then it's different. Whiles you was at school learning to love your friend there, Rose was all I had an' she was a heart's weight of good to me."

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Doris checked her vexation. She had also risen from the stone, and they went on again slowly towards the hill.

She was surprised at her brother's reticence and gentleness. She had expected a very stormy reply to her account of Rose's conduct. She began to think that Rika's influence had prevailed. Although George took the part of his old friend, he was no longer what Doris called "silly about Rose."

"You and Miss Masham seem to be great friends," she said after awhile.

"Yes, surely, she's real good, she is, and she makes me laugh;" he spoke heartily, he was so truly glad to be able to sympathise with Doris.

"Her goodness is only one of her qualities. She made me so happy when we were at school together by her sweet temper and her brightness; and she is so sympathetic, she has a way of feeling personally for others that is almost comic."

"She's real kind to mother—I like her for that too," George sighed. He wished Doris

would treat her mother with more deference. It seemed to him that his sister received all her mother's care and tenderness as if they were her due.

But Mrs. Burneston was too intent on carrying out the plan she had proposed to herself to be turned aside to any other thought, and she only noticed George's words to contain praise of Rika.

"She is a great reader too," she went on; "it must be pleasant to you to have a companion with whom you can talk about your books. I should think you often feel the want of this, don't you?"

"I cannot really say;" he looked thoughtful. "I've getten so used to pondering on 'em whiles I'm by myself 'at I thinks I likes it better than hearin' opinions which donnut jump wi' mine. You see, lass, I hevn't many books, an' I reads 'em ovver an' ovver till I luovs 'em. Ay, my lass, I luovs 'em mitch as you luovs your bairn."

Doris smiled at George's gauge of the intensity of her love for her little one, though she avoided discussing the question.

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"Your mind is so much stronger and your will is so much firmer than Rika's that I fancy when you'd been together a short while she would be easily moulded to your views."

George laughed.

"Maybe so, lass, nobbut we'll not hev t' chance o' findin it out. Maybe we'll nivver meet again. This place isn't likely to suit Miss Masham."

"You quite mistake." Doris spoke eagerly, here was her chance, she thought. "My mother has asked her to come to the Cairn whenever she likes, and Rika says she means to come."

"Surely?" George felt contradictory; it seemed to him hard that his mother, who had never offered an invitation to Rose, should be so friendly to a comparative stranger.

A strong conviction told Doris that she had better let the matter rest and trust its issue to time and opportunity, but she had no intention of revisiting the Cairn for some time, and she could not leave her work unfinished.

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"George"—she spoke very gently—"you can make me very happy."

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His honest brown eyes brightened, and a warm glow of pleasure spread over his pale face, while a smile of exquisite sweetness parted his thoughtful lips.

"D'ye say so, lass? I'll be reeght fain to ken what it is."

His earnest glance was searching her, and she blushed under it and winced. Her conscience was asking Doris whether her wish was solely for the happiness of this brother so anxious to prove his love to her.

"I should like to have Rika for a sister," she said, and then she stopped.

George smiled. His first impression was that Doris must be strangely blind if she imagined that Miss Masham would take up with a farmer's son like himself.

"You mistake, lass," he said. "Like takes to like, an' Miss Masham an' me's not likely to suit."

"I know what you mean,"—Doris roused the whole strength of her will against this obstacle,

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—"but you do not understand Rika. I am sure you are in many ways suited to one another and would make a very happy couple."

George's smile faded as she went on.

"You have forgotten one thing, lass," he said, "a man cannot love two at once, an' I love Rose."

"George, you must not, you cannot love Rose. I tell you she's not worth your love. I am sure she would not make you happy, she is far more likely to disgrace you. I don't know which is worst, her conduct or her temper."

Doris spoke vehemently, and her brother grew red, he was trying hard for self-control.

VNiVERSiTAS STVDII SALAMANTiNi

"Stop there, lass, or I may say something foolish; you an' me must not talk about Rose, it isn't safe."

Doris was calm again when she answered.

"I am sorry I spoke so openly. I do not mean to be unkind. I did not know you still cared for her; but, George, I am older than you are, and marriage and society have made me still older, and love is not the only thing to be thought of in marriage."

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George looked at her more quickly than was usual to him, for his lameness had increased his slowness of movement, then seeing that she looked in earnest he smiled.

"Do ye mind how you said to me oop at t' Hall 'at you an' me looked at things different ways, an' it struck me there was reason in it. Well, it's t' same now, you look at marriage from one end, an' I looks at it fra t'ither."

"Ah, but I said that about matters on which there might be differences according to the differences in relative duties. This is quite another question, only a question of the change which a few years of experience and knowledge of the world must bring to you, George. You say you like Rika; well then, there is no risk, for you are sure to love her well enough when you come to know her better. She has no money certainly, but she has every other requisite. She is pretty and clever, and very, very bright and loving, and so kind in illness; then she is well-born, and all her friends and relations are people of position and culture; and with all this she is so wonderfully simple and

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unconventional that I believe she actually prefers the Cairn to Burneston Hall. Oh, George, think how much better it would be for you to have a wife who would help to

raise the tone of the family, whom I should be able to receive as a sister and introduce to my friends; think how proud mother would be of such a daughter."

She paused. His listening, unmoved face puzzled her. He could hardly listen so patiently, she thought, if he entirely disagreed with her appeal.

"You make very sure o' Miss Masham," he said with a grave smile. "Seeams to me she may look for a rise in life as well as anybody."

Doris felt rebuked. She knew well that she had no right to take Rika's consent for granted.

"I only make sure for two reasons; first, that I believe she is entirely free to love any man who seeks her love in earnest, and next, because she has told me more than once that in marrying she would only think about her husband, not about his money or his position. It is just a special chance, indeed it is. Surely

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you will not be so utterly selfish as to sacrifice us all to your infatuation for Rose Duncombe?"

No answer. He walked on faster, and stopped, at last, when they reached the top of the Cairn. He waited for Doris to speak, but she was too intent on his answer and the success of her project to see the wild grandeur of the scene. She had forgotten all her interest in Rika's account of the weird far-stretching moors.

"Well, lass," he said at last, "maybe we look yon with different eyes too. Seeams to me 'at if you were to come oop now an' agean ye'd maybe get cleared o' these mists which dull your sight. Eh, lass, John Bunyan would be a safer guide to you, Ah'm thinkin', than what ye're pleased to call knowledge o' t' world."

VNiVERSiTAS
STVDII
SALAMANTiNi

"No, indeed, George." Doris could smile now. It was absurd that a home-bred recluse like her brother should combat her wisdom. "I never argue with you about religion, because I know you are much better than I am; you always were; but this is quite different. There would be no harm in your marrying Rika; that

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is, I mean, of course, if she will marry you; but there would be a great deal of harm done by marrying Rose; and, besides, Rose does not care for you, or she would not do as she has done."

She stopped. George stood facing her, looking far taller than usual on the bare hilltop, with the far-off background of distant hills. His eyes glowed; his whole body seemed to vibrate with intense earnestness as he spoke far more broadly than usual.

"Listen, lass. D'ye mind when we waz lahtle bairns I telled ye a tale, an' ye did not lahke it cos I telled it fra a book. It tellt hoo a huckster-man found a pot o' grease, an' when his eyes was rubbed wiv it he saw t' warld was not t' same 'at he thowt he'd been livin' in," his talk got broader as he went on. "It's sae noo wi' you, Doris. Yu're blinded by pomps an' vanities an' t' lahke, or yu'd ken t' pooer an' t' trewth o' luov. Eh, lass, yu war a rare yan fer trewth lang syne; an' noo yu bids me aks Rika Masham to wed me when I could nivver gi'e her my love as a husband sud

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do. What if Rose cannot love me; that changes nowt in my love. In God's sight Ah'm her man as mitch as if Ah'd wedded her. Ah've gien her yal t' luov Ah can give, an' it's oot o' my pooer to tak it, back. My heart an' my life are hers, whether she taks 'em ur leeaves 'em,—sae noo then!"

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CHAPTER IX. THE CLYTIE

RIKA wandered round the large airy nursery at Burneston, looking at a series of prints on the walls which Faith assured her were Master Ralph's special treasures in his childhood, but from time to time she glanced with an amused look at Faith herself.

The housekeeper sat with little Phil in her lap, carefully examining him to make sure that no harm had chanced during his absence, and giving vent now and then to peevish ejaculations, aimed at the ignorance displayed by "folks," clearly meaning Mrs. Barugh, on certain points of baby management.

Faith had tried all she could to prevent the visit, and had prognosticated all kinds of harm

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to little Phil, and it was almost a disappointment that her charge was returned to her looking far stronger and healthier than when he was taken away.

At last she looked round, "I do wonder, that I do, Miss Masham, that nut one o' you could hev thought to put a veil on him; why, if he was a bit of a farmer's brat he couldn't be mair sunburnt, he's as brown as August corn—yes ye are, my beauty."

Rika's eyes twinkled with amusement.

"Why, that's just what we're proud of, Mrs. Emmett. I thought you'd be as pleased as possible to get such a sturdy young gipsy home again; and he did have a veil at first, but he didn't like it; and we thought he was to do exactly as he liked—I'm sure I heard you say so."

Faith tossed her head, but she did not answer. She disliked jokes from anyone but Ralph, and it annoyed her that this friend of Mrs. Burneston's, a girl who dressed her own hair and required no help in dressing, should be invited to stay at the Hall.

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Rika was rather ill at ease this rooming. After a week's separation she felt that Mr. and Mrs. Burneston must have much to talk over, so she kept out of her friend's sitting-room; and Mr. Raine had contradicted her so decidedly at breakfast that she preferred to avoid the library lest she should find him there, and get into some fresh dispute with him.

"He is clever no doubt, and very amusing, but he is downright rude," the girl said with flushing cheeks, "and I dislike rude people."

As she reached the top of the old staircase it seemed to her that the portraits which covered the four lofty walls frowned at her; already in her bedroom one fair blue-eyed Burneston, in a well-curled flowing wig and brown coat, had seemed to her to shake his head and glance at the book he held as if to rebuke her idleness.

Rika stood looking down the wide old staircase. "What stories these massive oak balusters

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and standards could tell!" she said; "how many sad and tender partings that old lantern hanging from the roof has lighted!"

The staircase occupied three sides of a large square well; on the fourth side were shelves filled with china which nowadays would be deemed priceless, but beyond its colour china had no attraction for Rika. She lingered on the stairs studying the pictures: tightly-

bodiced ladies with flowing hair, round-eyed and round-mouthed; grave gentlemen with sad faces, looking all too old and prosaic for the fair dames languishing out of landscape backgrounds, not quite in harmony with their bare arms and abundant unkerchiefed charms.

Two of these pictures had a special fascination for her: one a delicate, lovely lady, in a more modern costume than the rest, whose cheek rested on her hand; there was an almost plaintive sweetness in this face which roused Rika's imagination. Opposite to it was a full-length portrait of Mr. Burneston in his boyish days, dressed as a sailor, with a background of sea.

Faith asserted that this portrait was the

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living image of Ralph, and Rika felt a certain curiosity to see again this heir of Burneston who seemed such a general favourite.

"Not with Doris, I think," the girl said; "she rarely speaks of him."

On the first landing of the staircase were two arched recesses at right angles; one contained a doorway leading to another gallery of bedrooms, in the other was a marble pedestal supporting a bust of the Clytie. The staircase was lighted solely from the lofty oaken roof, and light and shade fell sweetly on the exquisite face and shoulders. As Rika turned from the picture of the young sailor squire, her eyes fell on this bust.

"Why don't I make a study of her? It would be good practice," she said. "That cross-looking man in red will leave off frowning when he sees I am at work. It is a rare chance for me to get an antique head placed in such a light."

She hurried back along the gallery for her drawing materials. It was delightful to have found something to do; for to Rika's hardworking

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habits it was difficult to take holiday alone, though it was easy for her to share the holiday-making of others.

She was soon seated on the topmost stair, beneath the arched opening to the ante-room, a charming nook, furnished with well-filled bookshelves and Indian cabinets, leading to a gallery of bed-rooms.

She grew intent on her work; she rapidly marked out the head, and began to draw it in chalk. She did not hear the door into the ante-room open. All at once a footstep close behind her gave her a start, and sent her crayon across Clytie's nose.

"Oh!" she said, without turning round, for she thought only of the mischief done.

"I beg your pardon." But Gilbert Raine did not look sorry; he was too much amused by the originality of the whole proceeding to have much care for the false stroke. He began to think his first impression last night had been, correct, and that there was some character in Mrs. Burneston's friend, an idea which her silent coldness during breakfast had quenched.

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"It's too late to beg pardon now." She did not look at him. She was trying to rub out the unlucky stroke with a bit of bread.

No answer came. Raine was looking down admiringly at the bright sensitive face, full of expression, though the eyes were hidden by a deep fringe of dark lashes.

"I beg your pardon, do you want to pass?" She rose and gathered up her materials. "I did not mean to be rude really. I quite forgot I was filling up the passage."

"Thank you." But Raine stood still as soon as he had descended a couple of steps, and looked down at her drawing. "Upon my word, you have got it uncommonly like," he said; "it's really very good for a woman."

Rika looked up now, her eyes brimful of mischief.

"Which do you mean—the face or my attempt to copy it? You may say, if you like, that it is good for me; but you must not say it is really very good for a woman."

"But there never have been any women great painters."

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"The world is not ended yet, and I believe in progress," said Rika triumphantly. "Women will do something good in art, as well as other things, before all's ended. Hitherto the weak have made themselves weaker by yielding all, and the strong women have never been taught properly as men are taught; so the sexes never start fair."

"Then you ought not to resent my words; but I'll not shelter myself under that cover. I utterly deny that a woman can equal a man in any one thing—yes, I forgot," with a merry twinkle in his eyes, "I yield on two points—talking and caprice."

Rika looked aghast.

"There is no use in arguing with you; you are a misanthrope—you never had any sisters, I am sure. People are always positive of what they know little about."

Raine laughed.

"But I have history and many great writers on my side."

"I don't believe in history, and there are plenty of constant women in Shakespeare who are not

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chatterboxes, and every-day life will show you more good women. Look at that lovely pensive face shrouded in black lace," she pointed her crayon at the lady resting her cheek on her hand; "if we knew her story we should find she loved all too constantly, and as for talking, why," Rika's face glowed with sudden animation, "I believe her talk must have been like Mrs. Burneston's, full of diamonds and pearls,"—she stopped suddenly, conscious that she had been talking excitedly to this stranger, and that he was probably laughing at her. "I forgot you were here," she said abruptly; "I bore you, I know."

"If you were anyone else," Raine said with a laugh in his voice that provoked her, "I should say you were complimentary, but as I am sure you have no intention of paying a compliment, bad or good, I suppose I must apologize for interrupting you and take myself off."

Rika laughed. "Please tell me, first, who the lovely lady is with the pensive face and the lace mantilla."

"She is Ralph's grandmother. I can only

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just remember her, for she died young, but I fancy she was very loveable, and not nearly so sad-looking as the artist has painted her: but as she died so early she is no contradiction to my theory; shy women, and I am sure she was shy, don't get full use of their tongues till middle age, and she might have turned out very fickle if time had only been given her."

Rika had seated herself again, and gone back to her drawing. She wished Mr. Raine would go on talking instead of looking at her so sarcastically.

"I am sure of one thing," she said; "women may have a great many faults, but they are larger-minded than men are, they are not always twitting men with being violent and overbearing, and tyrannical, and contemptuous, and teasing," she said the last word with emphasis.

"Ah, but you are incautious—you let me see that you consider men guilty of these faults and yet you never speak of them; now see how much better we behave to women, we are always trying to create in you the most impossible virtue to a feminine mind."

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"What is that?" said Rika, looking up at him.

"Humility."

He said this quite seriously. Rika's lips trembled, and her face glowed with vexation.

"According to you," she said, pushing the loosened brown hair from her forehead, "we are a sort of chameleon—we just reflect the colour you are pleased to throw on us, and women who don't do this exactly are capricious. Well then, if we are not humble it is because men are so self-satisfied."

"Ah, my dear Miss Masham, now you come to the great safety-valve for the soul of a man—the tongue of his better half. Tell me honestly, did you ever see a thoroughly self-satisfied married man? He may and he does put on a good deal of conceit, but this is mere war paint, a try-on to deceive the outsiders. See the unhappy biped on his own hearth-rug, *tête-à-tête* with his tyrant, and you'll see him literally skinned out of all self-respect."

"Have you ever been married!" she said indignantly.

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"No, I thank God, I can't number that fault among my sins," and he laughed teasingly as he looked at her.

She had got far too angry to go on with her drawing. Quite heedless that she had passed her hand across her forehead and left a crayon smudge on its centre, she rose up—

"You are extremely irreverent; but, of course, you do not know what you are talking of. Some day you will have to eat your own words; but, indeed, I do pity from ray heart the woman who is sacrificed to you."

With this parting shot she ran back into the ante-room.

"A malediction," said Raine. "But I wish she had stayed a little longer. It was too bad of me to tease her. I will make my peace at luncheon, she is too pretty to quarrel with."

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CHAPTER X. THE SORCERY OF LOVE

BUT Gilbert Raine was more skilled in the art of raising the storm than in quelling it. At luncheon his allusions to the dispute vexed Rika, because they attracted Mr. Burneston's attention and made him, too, begin to tease.

Doris was preoccupied, and so did not attempt to help her friend, and Rika, though she had tried to keep a smiling face, got up from table with eyes smarting from repressed tears, and a feeling of sore vexation with herself, for being so easily irritated.

She hurried away to her bed-room. "How stupid I am to let him vex me! I feel altogether wrong. I must go home to work," she

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said; "this holiday life evidently does not suit me, it has made me conceited, or I should not be so touchy."

"Doris,"—Mr. Burneston had followed his wife into the garden after luncheon—"do you know that Raine is really smitten with Miss Masham? I never saw him take so much notice of any woman. You know he was jilted some years ago. Poor old fellow, I'm afraid your friend does not care a bit for him."

"Was he jilted?" but Doris spoke coldly; she had not at all relinquished her plan of marrying Rika to George, and she went on towards the houses where she knew she should find the gardener.

"Stay here a little," her husband said, and he sat down on the seat beneath the cedar. "Slater may wait. You seem to forget we have scarcely had a moment's talk since you came back."

Doris glanced at him from under the shade of her garden bonnet. She wondered he looked so grave.

"I am not going away again for a year,

Philip, so you will have plenty of time to get tired of me."

"You are a dear, good girl, to come back so punctually," he said, and then he prodded with his stick the dry fir needles that formed a brown carpet at their feet. Presently, in a more earnest tone, "Are you really glad to come home to me, my darling?"

Doris's thoughts had gone back to George and Rika, at this she looked up. "Yes," she said simply, "of course I am glad."

But, though she smiled sweetly, Mr. Burneston was not satisfied. Till now his wife had been perfect in his eyes, and she was perfect still; but he had felt her absence very

keenly, he had looked forward to her home-coming so ardently that her equanimity almost ruffled him. Perhaps the contrast afforded by Rika Masham's impulsive nature had impressed him, for as he sat musing under the cedar, while he told himself that his wife's graceful self-possession was one of her rarest gifts, he felt a hungry longing that she would show a more impulsive fondness towards him.

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He sighed. "You have not told me anything about your father or George; were they satisfied with your looks? I fancy from what you say that your mother was completely absorbed by her grandson."

"My father looks older, I think; and George—well, on the whole, I think George is greatly improved;" then with her wonted directness, "I was not hearty just now when you spoke of Mr. Raine and Rika, because I so dearly want her for a sister; please do not encourage him to like her."

Mr. Burneston smiled at her earnestness, and for an instant he thought reproachfully, "She can be warm enough about anything she has at heart."

"But are you sure George is free to care for your friend?" he said; "his is not a nature to change, and he did care for pretty Rose Duncombe, I'm sure. I used to see them together when you were away, remember."

"He does not deny it." Mrs. Burneston's cheeks flushed, as all that talk on the hill-top came back to her memory. "But, Philip, surely

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it is only a fancy; what can a clever thoughtful fellow like George have in common with such a girl as that? He and Rika, who is really well-educated, are much better suited to each other, and they seemed to find so much sympathy at the Cairn."

"Sympathy is not love, my darling, it belongs more to friendship. Some of the most ardent love affairs I have seen have been between opposite natures, natures which actually clashed till love made them one."

Doris sat thinking.

"Philip, do you think," she said timidly, and the tone made his pulses beat quicker, it was so unlike the even, trustful voice he was used to—"do you think," she repeated, "that I have deteriorated, grown worldly, I mean? George says I have."

He looked up at her lovingly.

"George is a simpleton," he said.

"No, indeed he is not! he never speaks at random; it was about this subject he said it; he said he loved Rose, and I said love was not the only requisite for a happy marriage, and that if he tried he would soon love Rika dearly,

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and he said I was worldly to set so little store by love."

"My dear child, you are simply perfect, but when you are as old as I am, you will know that this feeling, or sorcery, or whatever love may be, is the most obstinate and unchangeable of maladies. You, my darling," he glanced fondly at her unresponsive face and sighed, "when you know more about love yourself, you will be more merciful to George."

"What do you mean, dear?" she said. "It seems to me that you are as unreasonable as George is. He says I am too worldly to understand love, and you say I am too young. It

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seems to me that each person must love according to his or her temperament. Rose is violent and uncontrolled, and she loves, I suppose, in the same manner, and"—she stopped self-convicted. George was neither violent nor uncontrolled, and then her own passionate love for her child thrilled through her reproachfully; and yet, though she knew he was waiting to be assured of her love, she could not deceive her husband.

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"You are too good for me every way" she said, and her voice was so full of pain that he longed to take her in his arms and comfort her.

"Have I not often told you so?"

She got up hastily and went into the house. She met Mr. Raine and passed him, but neither of them spoke.

Raine hurried on to Mr. Burneston, he held an open letter.

"I say, Phil, here's no end of mischief. It seems this letter—it's from Ralph to me, poor fellow!—was left in the bag by mistake this morning. Benjamin has just brought it in." Then, seeing how pale and anxious the father looked—"He's not ill, old fellow, but he has got into a confounded scrape, and I'm afraid he will have to leave Eton."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.