



### CHAPTER III

#### A GENTLE HEART



FAMILY party was gathered in the drawing-room of Halliwell House after dinner on a lovely evening in May near to the open window, which commanded a magnificent prospect of hill and dale, with rich masses of woodland clothed with the thousand tender and living greens of early summer, reaching to the twin Eildons, beloved of Sir Walter, where they lost themselves in the soft, cool shadows of the gathering night. It was warm for May, which is ever a treacherous month in northern latitudes. The fire had been allowed to smoulder in the grate, but the lofty and handsome room was warm and comfortable, and Mrs. Bremner found her window-seat most desirable. She looked a young woman still to be the mother of two daughters and three sons, all of them approaching manhood and womanhood. Emily Bremner had enjoyed a life of ease and luxury into which no sorrow or care had entered until within the last few years. She was proving now, as many another mother has proved, that the time of least anxiety for her children is when she can put them to bed and close the nursery

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