

"I wish ta was."

"Well, I am not."

But even the men in the thick of the battle are not to be half so much pitied as the women who sit at home, watching, watching, watching for some good coming; and weeping, because there is nothing comes but disappointment and despair. Of all the sufferers in this unhappy quarrel, Eleanor was the greatest. Certainly her father never said a word of reproach to her. But words are not the only form of speech. His gloomy, haggard face, his restlessness and silence; the gradual but constant retrenchments in the once splendidly generous household, taught her better than any lecture could have done some forcible lessons regarding wilful sin and its consequences.

The old home, which she had looked back so fondly to, had become a very different place. It was so, indeed, from the first hour of her return. Nature, even in the household and the affections, abhors a vacuum; and as soon as Eleanor married, she began to efface her place in Burley House, and order it to new ways and new hopes. Jonathan had got used to his solitary dinner, and his quiet sit with his pipe. There were very few hours in which he really regretted the company, and the dressing, dining, and merry-making which had been naturally enough a part of Eleanor's reign there.

Also, he had begun to picture to himself another woman in her place as mistress. Into all his fair, large rooms he had brought Sarah, in imagination. Her quiet movements, her calm, sweet face, her soft, homely speech, had become a part of all his dreams and hopes for the future. Do as he would, Eleanor appeared to him somewhat in the light of a guest. She had given up her place, and he could not put her in it again. Aske's wife was not altogether the same thing as his very own daughter. He would have been puzzled to define the difference; he would, very likely, have denied it; but there it was.

And Eleanor, in the same vague, indeterminate way, was sensible of it. Her rooms were precisely as she left them, but she had outgrown all their belongings. She wondered she had ever cared for the books on the shelves. The pretty furniture appeared childish in its taste, and paltry in its quality, after the splendour of her apartments in Aske Hall. She could not help a feeling of contempt for the mementoes of the very days that in her memory had been bathed in a rosy light.

So that in the earliest hours of her wicked desertion from duty, she felt that she had made a grave mistake. But alas! alas! how hard are the backward steps to a forsaken home! And after her father's open defiance of Aske the road seemed barred to her. She was powerless to struggle against the forces, internal and external, that bound her to her transgression. Then she made an effort to resume her old place in Burley House,