

future. But the face, the eyes, the hair, the voice, all were the same; only the informing spirit was not the spirit of the brother whom hitherto she had known. That in truth was the soul of another.

'And you can leave us all in this terrible grief?' she said again, wondering at his hardness. 'You can add so much to what we are all suffering? Derwent! I cannot believe it!'

'I add nothing to any but you; and you have free choice of action,' he answered with quiet resolve.

'And mamma?'

'She has preferred her husband, who ruined us, to her children,' was his reply; 'and she too must abide by her choice. Do not let us speak of this,' he added hastily. 'It is only for you, my poor mistaken darling, that I am sorry.'

'And for yourself, Derwent,' she said with loving reproach.

'For myself,' he answered, not accepting her rebuke and putting it by with the lofty air habitual to him, 'I am simply destroyed. Do not let us talk of myself. I am only sorry to leave you, my dearest friend and companion of all my life; but you will it so, and I can do nothing.'

His voice, which had broken a little, steadied itself at the last words. The mother's tenacity and power of resolve which ran through him, made itself felt at this his first real contact with the hard things of life; his first struggle with a tangible not a sentimental misfortune. He had leapt at a bound from the dreamy impracticality in which he had hitherto lived to the sorrowful understanding and power of a man. But the transition was a painful one; and of all who suffered at the present crisis perhaps no one was so much to be pitied as he, he being the only one who had not some form of love to hold by.

'Here are papa and mamma!' said Muriel, as her father and mother passed through the porch and came slowly across the lawn to the seat under the tulip-tree, where their children were; the last family council ever to be held beneath its shade.

Both the young people rose—Muriel with the unconscious reverence of love, Derwent with the conscious courtesy of well-bred enmity; the former went across the lawn to meet her parents, but the latter stood erect and still, waiting. This was the first time they had met since the scene of yesterday when all had been made known.

The father came with bent shoulders, depressed head—his eyes on the ground, but seeing nothing because of the tears that filled them—walking with the dragging gait of an old man; but the mother lifted her beautiful face to the sky, and through all its