

WESSEX TALES

‘O; well, I must up and be off. I shall be home rather early. Sorry I can’t take you to-day, dear. Mind the children don’t go getting drowned.’

That day Mrs. Marchmill inquired if Mr. Trewe were likely to call at any other time.

‘Yes,’ said Mrs. Hooper. ‘He’s coming this day week to stay with a friend near here till you leave. He’ll be sure to call.’

Marchmill did return quite early in the afternoon; and, opening some letters which had arrived in his absence, declared suddenly that he and his family would have to leave a week earlier than they had expected to do—in short, in three days.

‘Surely we can stay a week longer?’ she pleaded. ‘I like it here.’

‘I don’t. It is getting rather slow.’

‘Then you might leave me and the children!’

‘How perverse you are, Ell! What’s the use? And have to come to fetch you! No: we’ll all return together; and we’ll make out our time in North Wales or Brighton a little later on. Besides, you’ve three days longer yet.’

It seemed to be her doom not to meet the man for whose rival talent she had a despairing admiration, and to whose person she was now absolutely attached. Yet she determined to make a last effort; and having gathered from her landlady that Trewe was living in a lonely spot not far from the fashionable town on the Island opposite, she crossed over in the packet from the neighbouring pier the following afternoon.

What a useless journey it was! Ella knew but vaguely where the house stood, and when she fancied she had found it, and ventured to inquire of a pedestrian if he lived there, the answer returned by the man was that he did not know. And if he did live there, how could she call upon him? Some women might have