

But before the day closed Harold knew that this was not to be. That young presence, which had flitted like a white new-winged dove over all the saddening relics and new finery of Transome Court, could not find its home there. Harold heard from Esther's lips that she loved some one else, and that she resigned all claim to the Transome estates.

She wished to go back to her father.

CHAPTER LI.

The maiden said, I wis the longe
Is very fair to see,
But my true-love that is in bonde
Is fairer still to me.

ONE April day, when the sun shone on the lingering rain-drops, Lyddy was gone out, and Esther chose to sit in the kitchen, in the wicker chair against the white table, between the fire and the window. The kettle was singing, and the clock was ticking steadily toward four o'clock.

She was not reading, but stitching; and as her fingers moved nimbly something played about her parted lips like a ray. Suddenly she laid down her work, pressed her hands together on her knees, and bent forward a little. The next moment there came a loud rap at the door. She started up and opened it, but kept herself hidden behind it.

"Mr. Lyon at home?" said Felix, in his firm tones.

"No, sir," said Esther from behind her screen; "but Miss Lyon is if you'll please to walk in."

"Esther!" exclaimed Felix, amazed.

They held each other by both hands, and looked into each other's faces with delight.

"You are out of prison?"

"Yes, till I do something bad again. But you?—how is it all?"

"Oh, it is," said Esther, smiling brightly as she moved toward the wicker chair, and seated herself again, "that everything is as usual: my father is gone to see the sick; Lyddy is gone in deep despondency to buy the grocery; and