

It was what Agnes's own kind heart suggested, but till her husband proposed it she could not. She slipped out, and, guided by the footsteps above, easily found the room. She tapped at the door, and it was opened immediately. Mrs. Maxwell was already dressed, as if for a journey.

'Oh, don't leave to-night!' cried Agnes, moved by the stony look in the haggard face. 'John sent me to say it,—indeed he did.'

'Tell him I thank him more than I can say,' she said slowly, 'but I will not try him further. I have been a curse to this house. The sooner I leave it the better. Ask him, as a last favour to me, if he will permit his carriage to drive me to my kinswoman's at Heron Hall?'

Agnes sped back to the drawing-room and delivered the message word for word.

'Come with me, Agnes,' he said, and the two went upstairs again together.

She was standing on the threshold, and covered her face with her hands when she saw them.

'I forgive you, as I hope to be forgiven,' said John gently. 'The first bitterness is past; and who am I that I should add my weak vengeance to the punishment of Heaven? In my own and my wife's name I ask you to stay. You are my father's widow, and justly entitled to a share of his wealth, and to some consideration from his son.'

And that was John's revenge.