

likely to see much of your sisters. And, I promise you, I will, as you ' say ' make allowance,'—except in one thing." And there came a sudden flash into the deep-set gray eyes, which made Mr. Rivers start, and doubt if his sister-in-law was such a very quiet woman after all. " They must not interfere with me in my bringing-up of my sister's child. There, I fear, they might find me a little—difficult."

" No ; you will have no difficulty there," said he hastily. " In truth my people live too much a life of society to trouble themselves about domestic concerns, especially babies. They scarcely ever see Rosie : and when they do they always moan over her—say what a pity it is she wasn't a boy, and that she is so delicate she will never be reared. But please God, they may be mistaken."

" They shall," said Hannah, between her teeth : feeling that, if she could so bargain with Providence, she would gladly exchange ten or twenty years of her own pale life for that little life just beginning, the destiny of which none could foresee.

Mr. Rivers went on talking. It seemed such a relief to him to talk.

" Of course, my father and they all would have liked a boy best. My eldest brother, you are aware—well, poor fellow, he grows worse instead of better. None of us ever see him now. I shall be the last of my name. A name which has descended in an unbroken line, they say, for centuries. We are supposed to have been De la Riviere, and to have come over with William the Conqueror. Not that I care much for this sort of thing." And yet he looked as if he did, a little ; and, standing by his fire-side, tall and handsome with his regular Norman features, and well-knit Norman frame, he was not an unworthy representative of a race which must have had sufficient elements of greatness, physical and moral, to be able to keep itself out of obscurity all these centuries. " I am rather Wiggish myself ; but Sir Austin is a Tory of the old school, and has certain crotchets about keeping up the family. Things are just a little hard for my father."

" What is hard ? I beg your pardon—I am afraid I was not paying much attention to what you said just then. I thought." Hannah laughed and blushed a little, " I thought I heard the baby."

Mr. Rivers laughed too. " The baby will be Aunt Hannah's idol, I see that. Don't spoil her, that is all. Grandmamma is always warning me that she must not be spoiled." Then seeing the same ominous flash in Miss Thelluson's eye, he added, " Nay, nay ; you shall have Rosie all to your self, never fear. I am only too thankful to have you here. I hope you will make yourself happy. Preserve for me my fragile little flower, my only child, and I shall bless you all my days."

Hannah silently extended her hand : her brother-in-law grasped it warmly. Tears stood in both their eyes, but still, the worst of this meeting was over. They had reached the point when they could talk calmly of ordinary things, and consult over the mother-