

IN THE GARDEN OF CHARITY

That was a new turn to her thought, and she repeated it.

"I've let 'em go. I've sent 'em away. They might ha' stayed, if I'd been willing. But I wasn't. I wanted 'em to go, and they've gone. I did it."

Her head sank on her breast; her courage was nearly at an end.

"I let 'em go," she said again, "when I might ha' kept 'em. It was what William left me, and I've driven 'em away."

This was still a new turn to her thoughts.

"It was what William left me, and I wouldn't take it. It was all I could do for him, and I wouldn't do it. It was God's mercy shown to me, and I wouldn't accept it. When the father was taken from me, God gave me his child. I could ha' had it at last. She'd begun to be softer to me. She'd changed. We'd all changed. If I'd been patienter and readier to wait it would ha' come right, and I'd ha' been able to protect 'em. Now, what 'll become of 'em? Oh, what 'll become of 'em? She ain't able to bring him up. She ain't able to take care of herself alone. Evil 'ull fall on 'em; and it 'll be my fault. I've driven 'em out. I've a good home and every comfort for 'em, and it 'ud ha' been my joy and pride to have cared for 'em both, and yet I sent 'em away. I've been false to William. God sent me his wrong to put right, and I wouldn't put it."