

"Of course you will."

Minnie slowly left the room. Tom walked up and down, and stopped from time to time to listen. At last the small step was heard returning, and the child said gravely, opening her hand: "I took it just as Maggie was doing my bed. She didn't see. But it is mine; so I had a right to take it, hadn't I?"

"Of course you had. Come, be quick. I must take it to Cardigan, if not further, and the poor woman can't wait."

He snatched it from her in such a hurry, that the child fixed her big eyes gravely and inquiringly on his face, and he was fain to get away as fast as possible. He did not even thank the little one, but kissed her with a short "Good-bye, pussy," and ran down the terrace steps.

Minnie stood looking after him for a long while, and it occurred to her that she would have liked to give the poor woman the money herself.

"Did Kathleen beat you?" was her first question, when she met her sister.

"Oh, not much," said Winnie, blushing so deeply, however, that her eyes swam.

"Why?"

"Because I played on the harp. Oh, Minnie, you don't know, I've found Llewellyn's song. I know it quite well. I'll sing it you when nobody's by."

Edleen sat over her account books again the whole of the morning, and only closed them and pretended to be writing letters, when she saw her husband and the Vicar walking up and down the terrace past her windows.

"Of course," said Vaughan, standing still; "people again insist on shutting their eyes to what is evident to me. They think me an eccentric visionary when I declare that the Suez Canal must be made. I immediately bought a great number of shares, I, who earned my money by hard work. One must do things in a grand way, say I. People will never see where they ought to invest money. I can show them by calculations a child would understand, that the proceeds will be tenfold, two hundred per cent., and more. And when I have talked myself hoarse and explained everything to them, they shake their heads and say: 'Vaughan is a dreamer.' Should I be wealthy now, if I had been a dreamer? No, I was far-sighted when a boy, and did many a profitable stroke of business for my father, when he was still a poor man. A dreamer, indeed! I cannot stand narrow-minded people. They have commerce with India and Australia as well as I have; they can see the map as well as I can. But they don't look at it—they don't calculate how much money time costs. I've no patience with them!"

"The two gentlemen sauntered down to the garden, and Edleen opened her fatal books once more. She added up a whole page, negligently, with intentional mistakes, jotted down the false sum and hastily wrote: Receipts, so much; and Expenditure, so much—below it—showing a large deficiency.

Then she drew a long breath of relief, and sat gazing at the word which had cost her several sleepless nights before she had soothed her conscience with the consideration that she was free to use her pin-money as she listed, and might cover the household expenses with what she saved from her toilet. Tom had been with her twice on the preceding day, tormenting her beyond endurance, and both times she had given him money. She felt as if her husband's stern eyes must see her heart throb through her dress. And that morning he had asked her: "Was Tom here?" and she had hastily replied in the negative, before he could mention day or hour, so that her lie might seem less glaring. He had compressed his lips and kept silence, for he had

seen Tom go away after cheating Minnie out of her little cross. His heart ached with the fear that his wife had lied to him, and yet he hoped she might really have been ignorant of her son's presence.

Edleen leaned back in her chair, staring at the accounts till her head swam, and she began dimly to wonder how she would appear to her stern, upright husband, with his vast, comprehensive mind, his bold thoughts, and his power over thousands of toiling men. Should she be the worm gnawing at his heart and cankering all his lofty aspirations! Would he ever crush her under his foot? A mist rose before her eyes.

A servant came in, bearing a card, and announcing a gentleman who wished to speak to her.

The man who entered the apartment was well dressed; he had a very sharp, pointed nose, dark eyes, remarkably close together, a high forehead, thin hair and beard, and a small, spare figure.

"I have not the pleasure——" began Mrs. Vaughan, rather stiffly, and in a low voice.

The stranger answered in a still lower key, as he bowed obsequiously.

"I am here on a trifling matter of business, and shall not keep you long. It is only that your son has drawn a few bills on your name, telling me I might get them cashed here at any time."

"Let me have them," said Edleen, with such cold dignity, that the man quite cowered before her. She had turned her back upon him to conceal her sudden pallor, and rested her hand on the desk for a moment to steady herself. Then she took out the money, thanking God that she had a sufficiently large sum in her keeping, and dismissed the stranger without another word.

When he was gone, and she heard her husband and the Vicar's steps still quietly pacing the garden, she sank into a chair, placing both her hands on her heart, and panting, panting till her want of breath brought on a kind of spasm, and she bit and tore her handkerchief in an agony of choking and coughing. By-and-bye she picked up the card she had dropped on the carpet. The man's name was Roberts. That told her nothing. She tremblingly locked away the card, the account books, the empty cash-boxes and purses, and walked up and down the room wringing her hands. Her breast was still oppressed; she lifted her hands to her throbbing temples, and dabbed her dry, burning eyes with the shreds of her handkerchief. What *should* she do? To whom should she turn?

The two gentlemen came in from the terrace, the Vicar making some excuse for not having done so at first, and they sat down before the chimney to converse. Gwynne's quick eye soon discovered that his fair hostess was indisposed, and he rose to take his departure; but Vaughan, who had no wish to remain alone with her, and felt his heart tremble at the impending necessity of disclosures about Tom, detained him and kept him busy talking.

"Are you of opinion that one must save a human being at any cost, even at the risk of endangering others?" asked Vaughan, suddenly.

The Vicar slowly passed his hand across his lips. "There are many ways of saving a human being," he said. "On the whole, I am not very confident in this respect; my experiences have not been favorable. I have made great sacrifices and generally repented of them afterwards."

"But where are the bounds that one's charity should not exceed?"