

besides her packing. She had to entrust to Silence's care all the gifts she had been preparing for Christmas for the children and servants, not omitting Heath and Silence herself. There was even a pretty little remembrance for Mrs. Ramsay.

When the packing was over she went across to Kenwyn to bid her friends good-bye, but she had no time to linger in the pleasant fireside circle. 'I have promised the children to be back for tea,' she said a little breathlessly. She had seen a good deal of Basil Ramsay, and liked him very much. He was leaning back in the luxurious easy-chair that Dick Trafford had appropriated for his own use, and looked contentedly at his stepmother, who was sitting opposite him. Canon Ramsay had evidently been reading aloud.

'Dick is coming back to us for Christmas and the New Year,' observed Felicia placidly, when Joan had hurriedly stated her errand. He and Basil get on very well together—don't they, Alick?' Canon Ramsay smiled in rather a humorous way. 'He says that the missionary is more highly flavoured than he expected, and that there is some spice of fun about him.'

'Dick little knows what a pickle you were in your young days—eh, lad?' But there was a tender, fatherly gleam in Canon Ramsay's eyes as they rested on his son's face.

When Joan took her leave, Felicia followed her out into the hall.

'I am so glad, dear,' she whispered; 'you will have a happy Christmas at Morningside with your dear old friend.'

'Oh yes, I hope so; but'—blushing—'we always spend the evening at the Abbey—it is an old custom, you know.'