

if you will allow me. Cynthia, you had better go home."

But Cynthia shook her head. "I will wait for you here," she said; and she seated herself beside the stricken old man. Half an hour elapsed before Mr. Drayle returned to her; he was alone. He did not speak until they had passed through the gateway; then he said quietly—

"Exit Mr. Josiah Burrige; exit also his son, Sampson."

"You mean——?" she asked as quietly, but pressing his arm.

"Yes, I've bought them out," he replied. "They will trouble us no longer. Cynthy, you will do me the justice to admit that I do not often preach, therefore permit me to call your attention to the fact, that, notwithstanding this progressive and sceptical age, virtue is still sometimes triumphant and vice consistently punished; also that a certain remark of the psalmist yet holds good—'The wicked flourish as the bay tree——' It is not necessary to finish the quotation. In this instance the Burridges have finished it for us. The village—to say nothing of Captain Sir Darrel Frayne, D.S.O.—can now rest in peace."

"Father," said Cynthia, "I have always had a sneaking fondness for you; but at this moment I don't know whether I love or admire you most."

"Thank you, Cynthy," he responded dryly. "May you never be able to decide!"