

said things with you there that they'd have said before many another maid.

"'Twas a thing I've thought on off here, where I've little to do but think, how a lass like you could put a finger on the lip of such rough tykes as Faddo, Jobbin, and the rest, keepin' their rude words under flap and button. Do you mind how, when I passed you comin' in, I laid my hand on yours as it rested on the dresser? That hand of yours wasn't a tiny bit of a thing, and the fingers weren't all taperin' like a simperin' miss from town, worked down in the mill of quality and got from graftin' and graftin', like one of them roses from the flower-house at Mablethorpe Hall—not fit to stand by one o' them that grew strong and sweet with no fancy colour, in the garden o' the Book-in-Hand. Yours was a hand that talked as much as your lips or face, as honest and white; and the palm all pink, and strong as strong could be, and warmin' every thread in a man's body when he touched it. Well, I touched your hand then, and you looked at me and nodded, and went musin' into the fire again, not seemin' to hear our gabble.

"But, you remember—don't you?—how Jobbin took to chaffin' of Lancy Doane, and how Faddo's tongue got sharper as the time got on, and many a nasty word was said of coast-guards and excisemen, and all that had to do with law and gover'ment. Cuts there were at some of Lancy's wild doings in the past, and now and then they'd turn to me, saying what they thought would set me girdin' Lancy too. But I had my own quarrel, and I wasn't to be baited by such numskulls. And Lancy—that was a thing I couldn't understand—he did no more than shrug his shoulder and call for more ale, and wish them all good health and a hundred a year. I never