

CHAPTER III

MRS. AMBROSE walked across the fields to Thorpe Bassett the next day. She had gone softly into the library before she had started to tell her husband where she was going. He had looked up half asleep or dazed from his work and had merely nodded his head. Then just as his wife was going he seemed to emerge from the clouds a little.

"Where's Silvia?" he asked. "I haven't seen her to-day."

"She is staying in her room. She is not very well. It's nothing, only just a headache," Helen Ambrose added. "Silvia is growing, you know, and it's a good plan she should rest now and again."

He did not ask about Dick or even the little boy. He only seemed to remember his girl, when he emerged at all from the spell which his work put upon him.

Before she went out of the room his wife paused and asked herself hurriedly whether she should broach the subject of Dick now or wait for another opportunity, but even as she paused her courage departed, and with a sigh she postponed the unpleasant task. It was one of Dick's very bad days. He had refused to get up, refused to let the maid do his room, and when his step-mother had gone in to see him he had lain with his face