

for me enough to marry me and live here with me? You as my wife and Hulver as my home are the two things I want. But that is all very well for me. The scandal will fall worst on you. If I can stand it, can you?"

"Yes."

"It will come very hard on you, Annette."

"I don't mind."

"I shan't be able to shield you from evil tongues. There is not a soul in the village that won't end by knowing, sooner or later. And they think all the world of you now. Can you bear all this—for my sake?"

"Yes."

"And yet you're crying, Annette."

"I was thinking about the aunts. They will feel it so dreadfully, and so will Mrs. Nicholls. I'm very fond of Mrs. Nicholls."

He caught her to him and kissed her passionately.

"Do you never think of yourself?" he stammered. "You chucked your name away to please poor Dick. And you're ready to marry me and brave it out—to please me."

"You are enough for me, Roger." She clung to him.

He trembled exceedingly, and wrenched himself away from her.

"Am I? Am I enough? A man who would put you through such a thing, even if you're willing, Annette. You stick at nothing. You're willing. But—by God—I'm not."