

excited little clap. "Don't you know? How delightful for me to be the first to tell you! He's where he ought to be—in the bosom of his family."

Hargreaves incredulously stared.

"Do you mean to say he is reconciled to his wife?"

"I do; he is, and they've gone into a little house in Hendon; and there, Mr. Hargreaves, they want to be left alone for a little while."

Hargreaves helplessly sat down. "I can't believe it. You might have written to let me know," he said reproachfully.

"Bless me! I haven't had time to remember even that you were in existence, I've had so much to do," she replied flatly. "Besides, I thought he'd write."

"He didn't. Men are always selfish in their happiness. He was glad enough to hang on to me when he was down on his luck," said Hargreaves gloomily. "But I don't grudge him it. Tell me how it happened."

"In the most ridiculous way," said the little story-writer, composing herself for five minutes' genuine enjoyment. "Do you remember an excursion Woodgate and my Tim made up the river one Saturday afternoon? Well, it all came out of that."

"How?"

"Well, the absurd boy, who by some curious means had obtained a glimpse into the man's heart that day, took it upon himself most audaciously to write to Mrs. Woodgate. What he said in that letter, Heaven only knows. I did not dare to ask, and never will; but it had the desired effect, and brought her to London. And there they are."

Hargreaves got up and took a turn across the floor.

"At Hendon, did you say? Have you been there?"

"Yes, I was there every day till they got the place in order. Her things were all here, you know; and now they've got to be let alone."

"And what is the state of the domestic atmosphere? Is the reconciliation complete?"

Sophia Ryder looked a trifle perplexed, and it seemed to