

about as far off as Bradley. It won't do me a mite o' harm. It will be rather a good thing for my property; it'll raise t' price of it, and I hev, as ta knows, a goodish bit o' property in that direction."

"Mr. Braithwaite, give me your hand. You are the most far-seeing and sensible man I happen to hev among my clients and acquaintances. I respect you, sir."

"I thought ta would choose to find out t' truth about me, some-day or other. Now we'll walk a bit down t' park. I want to hev a talk wi' thee about it." Rather reluctantly Perkins acquiesced. He did not relish this interference, but if Amos was acting for the lady of the manor he was in no way over-stepping his power; and it became Perkins' duty to listen to his instructions. Still, Amos was undoubtedly irritating. He was not conscious of his authoritative air, nor of that excessive faithfulness to Edith's interests which was natural to the newness of his relationship to her; but Perkins was conscious of it. In his heart he was calling him very uncomplimentary things as they returned from their walk.

It was then twilight, and they met Edith in the hall as they entered it.

"Go into the parlour, Mr. Perkins," she said; "we shall have tea directly; and, father, you must please come with me a few minutes."

She put her arm through that of Amos and took him with her up the stairway. Perkins stood a moment, watching with amazement and some scorn, the old man's excessive politeness, and the air of pride and satisfaction which he unconsciously betrayed. Then he sat down in the parlour, and watched the footman bring in some exquisite tea-cups of royal Worcester upon a silver salver. He reflected, that though he had frequently taken tea at Bradley, the royal Worcester had never been brought out in his honour. The circumstance, slight as it was, gave him the key of the position. It was evident that Amos had come to Bradley as a favoured ruler, and that it would be to his interest to endorse all that Amos desired. Since he could not supersede him, the next best move was to work with him.

In the meantime Edith had taken Amos to a large, lovely room, profusely ornamented, and draped with pale pink. In the very centre of it stood a little cot, a drift of snowy linen and lace, and fast asleep within it the loveliest of babies.

"Look at little Joe, father!"

"My word! Hey, Edith, he is a beauty!"

And the proud mother, and equally proud grandfather, stood silent a few minutes before the small monarch, and then tiptoed themselves gently out of his presence. The innocent babe, the lovely mother, the shrewd, world-worn old man—what telling contrasts they unconsciously made!

After tea, Perkins rose to depart. "Take a seat in my gig," said Amos. "We'll tie thy horse behind it."

"Father, you are surely not going to Bevin to-night?"