

children will need new clothes. They cannot possibly do without. As soon as Edward gets something to do we can give it up again."

"Sewing!" said Robert, bitterly. "So it's come to that again with us. I thought we had given that up for good some years ago."

"Only for a time, Robert. How could you expect to keep such a family on your salary? Besides we have some debt, and I'll be much better than I was when I sewed before.—I have Kate to help me now."

"But I hate to have you ask sewing from people."

"That will not injure us, my son. It's through no fault of ours we are reduced. I could easily ask money from them to pay our debts, and help us, and would get it, too, quite readily; but you know you and I decided never to borrow money."

"No, I'd never borrow," was the resolute reply.

"But don't commence the sewing for a couple of weeks yet, mother. Something may turn up for Ed, meanwhile, and it will be settled about Elliott's place, too, by that time. I wish it was decided one way or other. I always keep thinking I might have a chance, and yet I know I haven't. Every man in the place would like me to get it. Elliott said he would speak to Mr. Burke himself for me, but he knew it would do more harm than good. He can't bear to be dictated to, especially about his own business. If Elliott advised a thing, it would just decide him to take the opposite course. And then Markham is so much older, you know."

"You should not let yourself think of it, Robert. You are not likely to get it. Mr. Markham, as you say, is older, and of course has more experience; it would not seem natural to put you above him. You'll get a change all in good time. We never know what may happen. You and I have come through hard days before. Why should we not again? So, if you like, we'll not say anything about the sewing for a couple of weeks. I don't like to mention it to Edward; he will feel it so. I wish something would be put in his way. The poor boy is becoming so hopeless."

"All in good time, mother," said Robert, forcing a little laugh; "as you say, all in good time. Let us wait two weeks, anyway, and in that time who knows but the wheel of fortune may give a little turn, and behold! the Gray family riding gaily on the topmost wave of prosperity—or, to be less high-flown, and express ourselves more in accordance with our moderate desires, it may move just enough to set us up—well, let us say, a couple of pegs. I think a couple of pegs would do me to begin with. But we'll be far above that yet, mother. By the time you are an old lady, you shall do nothing but drive around in your carriage."

"I have been under the impression that I was an old lady already," said Mrs. Gray, smiling in spite of herself.

"Nonsense! What an idea! Why you're not near middle-age yet, I am only twenty-four myself, and you don't look much older than I do."

"You should not laugh at your old mother, Robert."

To tell the truth there was little laughing in either heart. For years mother and son had been in the habit of making a great display of cheerfulness to one another, and assuming a hope they did not always feel; very much like a pair of scales,—as one went down in the same proportion the other rose. Though each fondly thought to deceive the other with this well-meant hypocrisy, there was in reality no deception in it. Beneath his light laugh and humorous speeches, the mother detected his troubled mind, as easily as he, under her patient smile and cheerful way of making everything appear good and just as she wanted it, her anxious and oftentimes sad heart.

For two weeks no more was heard about the sewing. The first passed without any change for the better. Discouraged and sickened with hope deferred, Edward passed the most of his time in the house. People told him he would have a better chance in the summer. It sounded like mockery to talk to him of summer. How was he to live now? Little use of fighting through a dangerous illness and getting well, if it was only to become