

Soon, from the window of the attio in the central gable, she heard Tom's voice,—

"Who is it? Have you brought a boat?"

"It is I, Tom,—Maggie. Where is mother?"

"She is not here; she went to Garum the day before yesterday. I'll come down to the lower window."

"Alone, Maggie?" said Tom, in a voice of deep astonishment, as he opened the middle window, on a level with the boat.

"Yes, Tom; God has taken care of me, to bring me to you. Get in quickly. Is there no one else?"

"No," said Tom, stepping into the boat; "I fear the man is drowned; he was carried down the Ripple, I think, when part of the Mill fell with the crash of trees and stones against it; I've shouted again and again, and there has been no answer. Give me the oars, Maggie."

It was not till Tom had pushed off and they were on the wide water,—he face to face with Maggie,—that the full meaning of what had happened rushed upon his mind. It came with so overpowering a force,—it was such a new revelation to his spirit, of the depths in life that had lain beyond his vision, which he had fancied so keen and clear,—that he was unable to ask a question. They sat mutely gazing at each other,—Maggie with eyes of intense life looking out from a weary, beaten face; Tom pale, with a certain awe and humiliation. Thought was busy though the lips were silent; and though he could ask no question, he guessed a story of almost miraculous, divinely protected effort. But at last a mist gathered over the blue-gray eyes, and the lips found a word they could utter,—the old childish "Magsie!"

Maggie could make no answer but a long, deep sob of that mysterious, wondrous happiness that is one with pain.

As soon as she could speak, she said, "We will go to Lucy, Tom; we'll go and see if she is safe, and then we can help the rest."

Tom rowed with untired vigor, and with a different speed from poor Maggie's. The boat was soon in the current of the river again, and soon they would be at Tofton.

"Park House stands high up out of the flood," said Maggie. "Perhaps they have got Lucy there."