

Had Rachel been a woman of stronger calibre, she would have assumed the reins of government at once, and given her orders to each, Stephan with the rest; but she had been subject to her capable husband's direction so long, that the voice of command was strange to her lips, and Stephan took the lead before she was conscious what she had surrendered.

Between Richard—a stout, dark-eyed lad of sixteen and a half years, with an all-sufficient sense of his own comeliness and importance—and Hugh, aged ten, whom he took under loving protectorate, came Winifred, a girl of thirteen, who had not yet learned to dispute her mother's will, any more than had good-tempered Hugh or amiable little Gwen, who had been her father's pet as the image of her mother, with a fair skin, and clustering auburn curls often in a tangle adverse to a comb.

It is a very old axiom that "the one who controls the purse rules the house"; and from the day of their marriage Evan Powys had made Rachel the custodian of his cash, not merely because he knew her to be thrifty and prudent, but also because she was better qualified by education to keep accounts of incomings and outgoings.

It was the safeguard of her authority when he was no more. She received and she paid. James Thomas came to reckon with her for the fish caught and sold; and, although at first inclined to make heavier deductions for the loss of her husband's service on board than was strictly just (seeing that the dead man had been equal owner of the smack and tackle), her clear head for figures carried the day.

Certainly he went away grumbling



"I DO BE MOST THANKFUL."

that "Widow Powys had got the better of him." But no sooner did that come to the ears of Richard Hughes than he marched down to the beach, and asked him if he wished to defraud the widow and orphans—then demonstrated to a nicety the proportion due, when the hire of a man was deducted from the partner's share (a share not to be ignored); and, finding the skipper still disposed to cavil, insisted on laying the matter either before the Justice at the Plas or before the Vicar.

James Thomas objected that they should lose the tide if he wasted time going either to Justice or Vicar over a matter that concerned only Mrs. Powys and himself.

The tide was certainly coming up the river mouth, but there was still a good stretch of sand bare; and, though Evan and the young fisherman were setting the boat in order, it was done in a leisurely way, as if there was plenty of time to spare.

Richard Hughes noted this, and also