

matched it. Yet she had no ground to complain, she told herself, no reason to be unhappy. Things might have been worse, ah, so much worse, she reflected. For a week ago she had been a captive, helpless, netted in her own folly! And now she was free.

Yes, she ought to be happy, being free, and, more than free, independent.

But she must go from here. And for many reasons the thought of going was painful to her. During the nine months which she had spent at the Gatehouse it had become a home. Its panelled rooms, its austerity, its stillness, the ancient woodlands about it, were endeared to her by the memory of lamp-lit evenings and long summer days. The very plainness and solitude of the life, which had brought the Tofts and Etruria so near to her, had been a charm. And if her sympathy with her uncle had been imperfect, still he had been her uncle and he had been kind to her.

All this she must leave, and something else which she did not define; which was bound up with it, and which she had come to value when it was too late. She had taken brass for gold, and tin for silver! And now it was too late. So that it was no wonder that when she came to the hawthorn-tree where she had gathered her may that morning, a sob rose in her throat. She knew the tree! She had marked it often. But to-day there was no one to follow her, no one to call her back, no one to say that she should go no farther. Basset was gone, her uncle was dead.

Telling herself that, as she would never see it again, she would go as far as the Great House, she pushed on to the Yew Walk. Its recesses showed dark, and the darker for the sprinkling of snow that lay on the park. But it was high noon, there was nothing to fear, and she pursued the path until she came to the crumbling monster that tradition said was a butterfly.

She was still viewing it with awe, thinking now of the duel which had taken place there, now of her uncle's attack, when a bird moved in the copse and she glanced nervously behind her, expecting she knew not what. The dark yews