

fight for it, and you mustn't back out for very shame.'

'If only I'm not *worse* than beaten,' sighed Oliver.

'You know to Whom to go,' answered his friend, in firmer, more certain tones. 'You can speak to Him both for your father and yourself, and He'll not let you fall.'

Oliver made no answer. He knew all that—he believed it most sincerely—and yet he could not have told anyone how the God he had believed in seemed to have grown far away in these days. How much that he had learned so easily in the happy old days at Staneslow seemed unreal and without meaning now.

'He's always with that Hutchins now,' he said at last. 'He can't bear the sight of him, I do believe, and yet at times Hutchins has only to say, "Come!" and my father 'll leave anything and go. What they're at together I can't say, but I know it's no good.'

'There's something between them that we don't know about. And after all, the time you've been with your father is but short compared with all the years he was left to himself. You must just have patience.'

Oliver lifted his head almost angrily, ready to rebel, in his restless misery, at the very mention of the word patience. But something in the other's face rebuked him, and he sat silent; and after a moment he got up, said good-night, and went away, taking his perplexities with him.

For three days after that Agar Wilson saw next to nothing of his fellow-lodgers. He was out a good deal, looking after another friend of his, whose sin and sorrow called for pity and help, and had not time to look for Oliver, though he thought of him often. He *heard* something of them, however, one night. The sailor, Hutchins, was there; and there seemed to be a quarrel going on, to judge by the loud angry voices that sounded distinctly through the floor. The dispute came to an end at last, and Hutchins went away; but Agar thought it best not to thrust himself forward, especi-

ally as Martin Haythorn had never seemed favourably disposed towards him. In the morning, as he went out, Oliver passed him on the staircase. He seemed to be in too much haste for anything but a very hurried 'Good morning,' but his friend fancied that he looked as if things were going badly with him.

That evening Agar Wilson sat at his work with an anxious heart, listening for sounds from below, and muttering now and then in his own fashion a hurried word of prayer for those two stormy troubled souls.

Father and son were alone together, and Martin Haythorn's voice was the only one he heard; but there was a good deal of noise going on—continuous angry talking and pushing about of chairs and tables. Agar wondered how Oliver's patience was holding out.

Presently there were a few words in yet louder tones, then a sound of something falling; and next, the door below was burst open, closed again with a bang, and heavy feet went quickly yet unevenly down the stairs.

'That was his father,' thought the anxious watcher above; and he listened more attentively than ever for a moment, and somehow did not like the dead silence that followed the uproar.

'It won't do to interfere betwixt them. If there was anything I could do Oliver would come and tell me,' he said to himself at last, and turned again to his work.

But, though he heard nothing more, his anxiety seemed to increase, and when a quarter of an hour had passed he got up suddenly and went downstairs, pausing an instant before the Haythorns' closed door, and then going on to the ground-floor.

'Did you see who that was that went out just now?' he asked of the woman who rented the little room nearest the street door.

'It was the first-floor-back's father,' she answered promptly. 'He was in drink, I believe, and in a fine rage as well. He looked as if he'd not go far before he'd get himself locked up.'

Agar said nothing, but went hurriedly