

"There is no more. He told me the amount, and sent me to St. Lazarus to fetch it, when he discovered that I did not wish him to return to the charity—you shall have the rest presently. It is yours by right of inheritance."

"Certainly it is, Brian. There can be no doubt about that."

"The money will be of service to you at a time of need."

"That's true."

"With a little of my own to it I may contrive to do something for you—and Dorcas. Why, this may be the beginning of a better, brighter life for us all," said Brian.

"It may," was the reply.

"And now," said Brian, suddenly arresting his father's progress, "before I leave you, swear here, under heaven, that you will keep your word in everything that you have said to-night."

"My dear Brian," exclaimed the father, "I—I have pledged my word to you already. I don't like to be continually swearing in this fashion. It looks as if you doubted me."

"You are poor; a great error makes you rich in name—a great injustice would make you rich in deed. I know little of you," said Brian; "you come to me as a surprise—a ruin. Swear to what I say!"

The man cowered at the sternness and the peremptory manner of his son, whose eyes he could see blazing at him in the darkness.

"I'll swear to what you like—I'll swear

to anything, Brian," he said, "but there is no occasion for this treatment of me."

Brian remained silent. The passion in him died away, and he stood thinking very deeply.

Suddenly he looked up.

"No, don't say a word," he exclaimed, "don't call God as a witness here. Good night."

"Good night, good night," replied William Halfday with alacrity, "I shall see you in the morning. This way to Datchet Bridge, I think you told me?"

"You cannot miss the village now. It lies straight before you, where the lights are shining."

"Thank you, Brian. Bless you—good night once more."

Father and son parted. The son watched him from the hill till darkness on the lower ground submerged him—the father went along the path which had been indicated, looking back more than once whilst Brian remained in sight against the background of a starlit sky.

The sense of being watched was irksome to William Halfday. He was not easy in his mind until he had lost sight of his son as completely as Brian had lost sight of him. Then he swerved suddenly, and even swiftly to the right, and went away—steadily away—from the lights in the village that had been pointed out to him.

There was more to be done that night than had been bargained for when toiling up the hill to his son's house, and, like Duncan's murder, "'twere well it were done quickly."

*(To be continued.)*