

"and heard that Anthony was going this morning: but I am afraid I am too late."

She told him that Anthony had just gone.

"Yes," he said, "I came to say good-bye; but I came by the orchard, and so we missed one another."

Isabel asked a word or two about his visit to the North, and they talked for a few minutes about a rumour that Hubert had heard of a rising on behalf of Mary: but Hubert was shy and constrained, and Isabel was still a little tremulous. At last he said he must be going, and then suddenly remembered a message from his mother.

"Ah!" he said, "I was forgetting. My mother wants you to come up this evening, if you have time. Father is away, and my aunt is unwell and is upstairs."

Isabel promised she would come.

"Father is at Chichester," went on Hubert, "before the Commission, but we do not expect him back till to-morrow."

A shadow passed across Isabel's face. "I am sorry," she said.

The fact was that Sir Nicholas had again been summoned for recusancy. It was an expensive matter to refuse to attend church, and Sir Nicholas probably paid not less than £200 or £300 a year for the privilege of worshipping as his conscience bade.

In the evening Isabel asked her father's leave to be absent after supper, and then drawing on her hood, walked across in the dusk to the Hall. Hubert was waiting for her at the boundary door between the two properties.

"Father has come back," he said, "but my mother wants you still." They went on together, passed round the cloister wing to the south of the house: the bell turret over the inner hall and the crowded roofs stood up against the stars, as they came up the curving flight of shallow steps from the garden to the tall doorway that led into the hall.

It was a pleasant, wide, high room, panelled with fresh oak, and hung with a little old tapestry here and there, and a few portraits. A staircase rose out of it to the upper story. It had a fret-ceiling, with flower-de-luce and rose pendants, and on the walls between the tapestries hung a few antlers and pieces of armour, morions and