

"That is, your father may die. I suppose you and your wife have talked over that probability. Beatrice would be able to endure the climate then."

"If I did not see that you were under very strong excitement, Charlotte, I should be very much offended by what you say. But you don't mean to hurt me. Do you imagine that I feel no sorrow in leaving father and my mother and you and the old home? My heart is very sad to-night, Charley. I feel that I shall come here no more."

"Then why go away? Why, why?"

"Because a man leaves father and mother and everything, and cleaves unto his wife. Charley, help me."

She shook her head sadly.

"Help me to break the trouble to father."

"There is no 'breaking' it. It will break him. It will kill him. Alas, it is the ungrateful child that has the power to inflict a slow and torturing death! Poor father! Poor mother! And it is I that must witness it,—I, that would die to save them from such undeserved sorrow."

Then Harry rose up angrily, pushed his chair impatiently away, and without a word went to his own room.

In the morning the squire came down to breakfast in exceedingly high spirits. And Charlotte looked at him in wondering pity, for Harry's face was the face of a man determined to carry out his own will regardless of consequences.

"Come, come, Harry," said the squire in a loud, cheerful voice, "you are moping, and eating no breakfast. Charlotte will have to fill three times before it is 'cup down' with me. I think we will take Dobbin, and go over to Windermere in the tax-cart. Eh? What?"

"I must leave Sandal this morning, sir."

"Sir me no sir, Harry. 'Father' will stand between you and me, I think. You must make a put-off for one day. Come, Harry, we will go and fish a bit. If you carry your colonel some, he will take the gift as an excuse for the day. Eh? What?"

"I think Harry had better not go with you, father."

"Eh? What is the matter with you, Charlotte? You are as nattert and cross as never was. Where is your mother? I like my morning cup filled with a smile. It helps the day through."

"Mother isn't feeling well. She had a bad dream about Harry and you, and she is making herself sick over it. She is all in a tremble. I didn't think mother was so foolish."

"Dreams are from somewhere beyond us, Charlotte. Maybe we had better not go to Windermere. We might be tempted into a boat, and dry land is a middling bit safer. Eh? What?"

Charlotte felt as if she could endure her father's unsuspecting happiness no longer. It was like watching a little child smiling and prattling on the road to its mother's funeral. She put Mrs. Sandal's breakfast on a small tray, and with this in her hand went up-stairs, leaving Harry and the squire still at the table.

"Charlotte is a bit hurrysome this morning," he said; and