

household had gone to sleep. "To-morrow morning, wet or fine, I shall go and tell father every thing. There is one comfort about him; he always knows what to do, and he is not afraid to do it."

The next morning was bright and lovely, with just a suspicion of frost in the air. Edith had partially recovered her mental strength and tone; and her rich and careful toilet was in sympathy with the mood of self-assertion which had followed her collapse of the previous day.

When she arrived at Bevin Hall it was about noon. A few minutes after Edith's arrival, he came in dusty and hungry, and in one of his crossiest moods.

"Oh," said Edith, rising up impetuously, "I am so glad to see you, father."

"Happen ta is, but, to tell t' truth, I'm none so glad to see thee at this time of t' day. My mind is full o' yarns and Israel Sutcliffe. Sutcliffe has been up to meanness, and I'll hev to teach him that honesty is t' best policy, even if a man thinks of it as low down as that."

"I am sorry you are busy, for I am in trouble, and I counted on your help."

"Why, then, folks that count on me aren't apt to find me worth naught. Whatevver trouble is ta in now? Joe and thee again?"

"Father! Joe never gave me any trouble."

"Oh, he didn't! Then I'm far mistaken. I might hev known, though, thou would go back on me. That's what folks get, and deserve to get, who meddle with man and wife. Who's troubling thee, then? Perkins, I'll be bound. If it's him, he'd better take care; I'd like a fight wi' him, uncommon well."

"It is not Perkins, father. It is the rector's wife, and Lady Wilson, and Lady Charlton, and Mrs. Lumley, and Mrs. Pennington—"

"Will ta be quiet? What am I to do between thee and a lot o' women? I know a deal better than to touch a job o' that kind."

"But you must make them behave themselves, father."

Then Amos laughed with a heartiness that finally made both Martha and Edith join him. "Mak' t' rector's wife, and Sir Thomas Wilson's wife, and Major Pennington's wife, and Squire Lumley's wife behave themselves! Why, my lass, I niver managed to mak' my own wife do as I wanted her to do, and—"

"Thou had better say nothin' about my sister Ann, Amos."

"And how does ta think I can manage other men's wives? Thet is a bit o' wool above my spinning, Edith, or mebbe I'd like to try it."

"Listen, father." Then she described to him, as well as she could, the ordeal through which she had been made to pass on the previous day; and soon she saw from the gathering colour in his face, and the quick, passionate flashes in his eyes, that he was catching fire at her anger.

He was eating his dinner as he listened, a process usually thought to induce kindly feeling; but Amos rose from the table