

MASTER OF HIS FATE.

A TALE OF THE WEST RIDING.

BY MRS. AMELIA E. BARR.

XIII.—JOE RISES IN ESTEEM.

"Now then, Perkins, if ta hes any questions to ask, thou may git all ta can out o' me."

The two men were walking and smoking in the beautiful alleys of the rose garden. Two world-worn beings they looked, amid the unspeakable freshness and loveliness which surrounded them.

"Well, Mr. Braithwaite—"

"Ay, thou hed better call me Mr. Braithwaite, I am got to where it's t' right thing to do. A man wi' t' overcharge o' Bevin and Bradley on his mind, deserves a bit o' respect, I think."

"Did I understand you to say that you had the charge of the Bradley estate, sir?"

"I'm not going to mell in thy business, so thou need not look so turkey-gobbler like. I'm taking my daughter's place, not thine. That is, I'm taking Joe's place; and, I must say, not a minute before t' right time. There's four houses on Kattal Moor unlet for two years; now then, how does that come about?"

"If you have any right to ask—"

"To be sure I hev, did ta iver know me bother my head about other folks' concerns? But if ta wants to, thou can draw me up a power of attorney."

"Then I answer that I cannot force people to rent houses. They are there, if they want them."

"But thou could do summat to mak' people want them. Tell Darley to tak' his paint pots there, to-morrow, and hev t' garden palings put up, and t' flower beds weeded, and t' window glass put in; mak' them look comfortable, and they'll rent; I'll be bound they will. There's more o' t' same kind too. That mill on Sorbey beck has been empty for five years."

"As a mill; that's likely; but I'll tell thee what! T' Wesleyan Methodists want a chapel at Sorbey—I know they do, for they came to me for a subscription. Offer them t' building on a long lease. They'll nobbut hev to put t' seats in and paint it up a bit. Give 'em their own terms if they are any way near t' figure."

"That is a good idea, Mr. Braithwaite."

"Ay, I think it is. I mostly know what I'm doing. And I don't want a mill there; it won't suit my plans. If they say t' building is too big, thou may tell them that ta knows there will be plenty o' men and women to crowd it before varry long."

"Whatever does ta mean?"

"I understand my awn meaning, which is more than many folks do. Now, thet is all about Bradley at this time, only I'd