

her brother! But to be cast off in this cool and sudden way went to her heart, notwithstanding the strong moral support she had of Everard behind her. She had served, and (though he was not aware of it) protected, and guided for so long the helpless lad, whose entire comfort had depended on her. And even Everard could not console her for this sudden, almost contemptuous, almost insolent dismissal. With her face crimson and her heart beating, she turned away from her ungrateful brother.

"You ought not to speak to me so," cried the girl with bitter tears in her eyes. "You should not throw me off like an old glove; it is not your part, Bertie." And with her heart very heavy and sore, and her quick temper aflame, she hurried away out of the room, leaving them; and, like the others who had gone before, set off by the same oft-trodden road, through the village, to the Grange. Already Miss Susan's new home had become the general family refuge from all evil.

When Reine was gone, Bertie's irritation subdued itself; for one man's excited temper cannot but subdue itself speedily, when it has to beat against the blank wall of another man's indifference. Everard did not care so very much if he was angry or not. He could afford to let Herbert and all the rest of the world cool down, and take their own way. He was sorry for the poor boy, but his temper did not affect deeply the elder man; his elder in years, and twice his elder in experience. Herbert soon calmed down under this process, and then they had a long and serious conversation. Nor did Everard think the proposal at all unreasonable. From disgust, or temper, or disappointment, or for health's sake—what did it matter which?—the master of Whiteladies had determined to go abroad. And what so natural as that Reine's marriage should take place early, there being no reason whatever why they should wait; or that Everard, as her husband, and himself the heir presumptive, should manage the property, and live with his wife in the old house? The proposal had not been delicately made, but it was kind enough. Everard forgave the roughness more readily than Reine could do, and accepted the good-will heartily, taking it for granted that brotherly kindness was its chief motive. He undertook to convince Reine that nothing could be more reasonable, nothing more kind.