

me, ever so long ago,—do you not remember?—that you would always call me 'Clara,' just as you call Amy by her name."

The old man looked towards the window, and he took off his spectacles to have a good survey over the Crag. When he came back he was busily engaged in cleaning the optical helps with his pocket handkerchief.

"Well, Clara," he said, "we must send for Amy."

"Not for the world, sir; oh, no!"

"What! are you not going to say good-bye to your companion?"

Clara reddened a little, then became much moved, and finally did an excellent thing. She burst into tears.

"What!" cried Mr. D'Alton, looking at Mr. Meldon. He beheld a smile on the face of the gentleman, and became reassured. As Mr. D'Alton was a man of rapid thought and great penetration, perhaps he began to have a prevision also. But, with all his prevision and all his rapidity of thought, he never dreamt of what was coming. The fact was that one minute after she had commenced to weep Clara was weeping around the neck of old Mr. D'Alton and treating him in every way as if he were a relative rather than a visiting acquaintance. Not a word the young girl spoke, but kept showering upon the old man the marks of a child's love.

The old man could only say "Child! child! What is the matter?"

"You like little Clara, sir?"

The old man smiled. "You seem to know that very well."

"I do! And I know you have said little Clara is like *some* one you loved long ago."

"True," answered Mr. D'Alton with a voice of real feeling.

"And you would not like to afflict Clara, and wound her and—"

"What is it?"

"You must send Amy with Clara on this tour with papa."

The old man exclaimed "tour! on a tour!"

"Yes, sir, with me."

Mr. D'Alton looked at Mr. Meldon, and he saw plainly Mr. Meldon had come to the Crag with the object enunciated by his daughter.

"Mr. Meldon," asked Mr. D'Alton, "what am I to think of all this?"

"Well, sir," mildly replied Mr. Meldon, and with a voice like music, "the children need each other. Neither of them has a mother; and they have learned to love one another ever so much. If you accede to Clara's prayer, and give us Amy for the next month or two, she shall be as dear to me as Clara!"

The old man started, he knew not why; and he felt inclined to weep; and at last he yielded, he knew not why; and by the same arms which won Clara's first victory, a second was won; he declared "no matter what Amy wished, go she should."

"You shall hear from me constantly, and we shall be home within six weeks, I calculate. We shall bring with us a companion for Amy and Clara—our friend Alice Hayes."

"Then I am to rely upon Nelly Nurse and my most excellent nephew," rather cynically remarked the old man.

Here was something very strange, yet it fell in, somewhat, with Mr. D'Alton's idiosyncrasies. "Mr. Meldon's respectability was unquestionable. Mr. Seymour was a man of great estate; and to tell the truth poor Amy led a very mopish kind of life where she was. If Mr. Seymour liked Amy? Well, she was as good as he was, whoever he might be; and she was rich too; and if he happened to like her, she would be clear of Baring; and then there was no expense. On Meldon he—Mr. D'Alton—would depend his life and fortune. The man warmed him up, whenever he addressed him." Such were his reasonings.

That evening Mr. Meldon met "Crickawn" at the hall-door.

"Well, Tom, how is the widow?"

"Ever so well, sir."

"And Alice?"

"Oh, sir, she lives in the other world entirely, thank God."

"You know she comes with us on our tour?"

"God bless you, sir! I know all of it; and she has her heart fixed on something else, her mother sez."

"Would you like to come with us?"

"Would I like to come? Ah, sir, wid Miss Amy that fed my family many a