

kissed the old man's hand, and whispered,—“He is my husband too ; we meant to have told you to-morrow !”

So the dread secret was out at last ! Silence, that could be felt, ensued, and seemed endless to the two culprits, who, with drooping eyes, waited anxiously for him to speak.

Now, this announcement was hardly so unexpected as they supposed, and far more welcome than their wildest dreams could have anticipated. Lord Bromley's agent, who paid the annuity to Mrs. Leigh, was also in the habit of giving him periodical information of the well-being of his grand-daughter. When, however, she eloped from Captain Davidson's house, he had lost sight of her for a time, but afterwards picked up the clue at Mrs. Markham's. When they also disappeared so suddenly, the agent was again at fault, Bluebell having changed her situation in the interval.

Advancing years had softened Lord Bromley. The tidings of her elopement without any positive proof of a *bona fide* marriage preceding it, had shocked him into bitter remorse for having left her, an unprotected waif and stray, to the tender mercies of the world, and now she had passed out of his ken, and he could not but fear the worst.

In this frame of mind he came accidentally upon Bluebell in the spring woods, and the likeness to her father, which was singularly obvious, seemed the reflection of the thoughts that haunted him. Then, when Mabel mentioned her by name, it flashed upon him that what he had taken for a trick of imagination might be, indeed, a sober reality. Lord Bromley sought Mrs. Barrington, and elicited, in reply to his careless inquiries, the fact that the fair governess was a Canadian, and had come into her family from the Markhams'. This was conclusive, and he took every opportunity of observing Bluebell with an almost hungry interest. The elopement rankled unpleasantly in his mind. He watched her conduct narrowly, and was pleased to see that she seemed prudent and careful ; but his suspicions received a new direction by the mutual disappearance of Dutton and herself on the night of his return. It was a coincidence, at any rate, for had not Mabel asserted she had not come upstairs till one, before which hour Harry had not entered the ball-room ? He also detected two or three