

correctly analyse it. It was sheer, exuberant, instinctive, unreasoning, careless joy.

Then, after a long period of beatific solitude in the breakfast-room, he heard stealthy noises in the hall, and his fancy jumped to the idea of burglary. Excited, unreflecting, he hurried into the hall. Johnnie Orgreave, who had let himself in with a latchkey, was shutting and bolting the front door. Johnnie's surprise was the greater. He started violently on seeing Edwin, and then at once assumed the sang-froid of a hero of romance. When Edwin informed him that Hilda had come, and Charlie with her, and that those two were watching by the boy, the rest of the household being in bed, Johnnie permitted himself a few verbal symptoms of astonishment.

"How is Georgie?" he asked with an effort, as if ashamed.

"He isn't much better," said Edwin evasively.

Johnnie made a deprecatory sound with his tongue against his lips, and frowned, determined to take his proper share in the general anxiety.

With careful, dignified movements, he removed his silk hat and his heavy ulster, revealing evening-dress, and a coloured scarf that overhung a crumpled shirt-front.

"Where've you been?" Edwin asked.

"Tennis dance. Didn't you know?"

"No," said Edwin.

"Really!" Johnnie murmured, with a falsely ingenuous air. After a pause he said: "They've left you all alone, then?"

"I was in the breakfast-room," said Edwin, when he had given further information.

They walked into the breakfast-room together. Charlie's cigarette-case lay on the tray.

"Those your cigarettes?" Johnnie inquired.

"No. They're Charlie's."

"Oh! Master Charlie's, are they? I wonder if they're any good." He took one fastidiously. Between two enormous outblowings of smoke he said: "Well, I'm dashed! So Charlie's come with her! I hope the kid'll soon be better. . . . I should have been back long ago, only I took Mrs. Chris Hamson home."

"Who's Mrs. Chris Hamson?"