

MOTH AND RUST

"Yes. But, of course, there were numbers of others. I had many friends whom I had to——"

"Did you notice anything? Did you have any talk with her? Was she different to usual?"

"She does not generally talk much. She was rather silent."

"You did not think she looked as if she had anything on her mind?"

"I couldn't say. I know her so very slightly." Mary's voice was cold.

"She did not care for me," said Jos. "I knew that all along;" and he put his scarred hand on his mouth.

"She was not worthy of you."

He did not hear her. He took away his hand, and clenched it heavily on the other.

"I knew she didn't care," he said, in a level, passionless voice. "But I loved her. From the first go-off I saw she was different to other women. And I thought—I know I'm only a rough fellow—but I thought perhaps in time—. I'm not up to much, but I would have made her a good husband—and, at any rate, I would have taken her away from her father. He said she was willing. I—I tried to believe him. He wanted to get rid of her