

knows as much about me as it does of every one else."

Saville Moxon—now a barrister, who has distinguished himself on more than one occasion—lives in the Temple. Fifteen minutes bring them to his chambers, where they find him hard at work among his papers.

"I feel beastly awkward," says Muiraven, with a conscious laugh, as Moxon is eager to learn the reason of their appearance in such strange company; "but I've got a confession to make, Moxon, and the sooner it's over the better.—Now, my good fellow, pass on."

This last request is addressed to Joel, who, half doubting whether he shall make his cause good after all, recapitulates, in his rough manner, the whole history of Myra's return to Priestley—the birth of her child—her aimless searches after her betrayer—and, lastly, her unexpected death.

Muiraven starts slightly, and changes color as the child is mentioned; but otherwise he hears the sad story through unmoved. The other two men sit by in silence, waiting his leave to express their astonishment at the intelligence.

"Poor, Myra!" says Muiraven, thoughtfully, as Joel, whose voice has been rather shaky toward the end, brings his tale to a conclusion. "I don't wonder you thought badly of me, my friend; but there is something to be said on both sides. I never wronged your cousin—"

"You say that to my face!" commences Joel, his wrath all ready to boil over again at such a supposition.

"Stay! Yes—I repeat it. The person whom I most wronged in the transaction was myself.—Her name was not Myra Cray, but Myra Keir. She was my wife!"

"Your wife!" repeats Joel, staring vacantly.

"Good God!" exclaims Saville Moxon.

"Muiraven! are you mad?" says Stratford.

"My dear fellows, do you think I'd say a thing of this kind for the mere purpose of sneaking out of a scrape? You know what our ideas are on the subject. What man of the world would blame, very deeply, a youthful *liaison* between a college freshman and a pretty bar-maid? But this was no passing frailty of mine. I met this girl, formed an attachment for her, brought her up to London, married her privately in the old church of St. Sepulchre, and settled her at Fretterley, whence she—she—*left me.*"

And Muiraven, leaning back against the mantel-piece, sets his teeth at that remembrance, and looks sternly down upon the hearth-rug, although it all happened so many years ago.

"She left you—yes," cries Joel, "but not before you had near broke her poor 'art with your unkindness, sir. And she came back, poor lamb, to her own people and her own 'ouse, and died there, like a dog in a ditch."

"She left the house I had provided for her with—with—some one else," says Muiraven, frowning.

"She left it with me, sir, her own cousin, who wouldn't have hurt a hair of her 'ead. I searched for her long, and I found her un'appy and wretched, and I persuaded of her to come back 'ome with me; thinking as you had wronged her, for she never said a word of her being married, poor lass, from that day to the day of her death."

"She had sworn to me she would not, knowing how fatal the consequences might be of such a confession. Now, Moxon, you know all. Had my wife remained with me, I might perhaps have summoned up courage before now to tell my father the truth; but she left me—as I thought to disgrace herself—and though I searched for her in every direction, I was unable to obtain any clew to her destination. Then I went abroad—you remember the time—and hoped to forget it all, but the memory has clung to me like a curse ever since, until I met this fellow to-day in the Docks. Else I might have gone on to all eternity, considering myself still fettered by this early *mésalliance*.—And the child died too, you say," turning again to Joel; "was it a boy?"

"The child ain't dead no more than you are," replies Joel, gruffly, for he has been cheated out of his revenge, and no one seems the better for it. "He's a strong chap of four year old, all alive and kicking, and if you're the gentleman you pretend to be, you'll provide for him as a gentleman should."

"*Alive!* Good Heavens! and four years old! How this complicates matters!—Moxon, that child is my legitimate heir."

"Of course he is, if you were married. But where is he? that's the next thing to ascertain.—With your family, eh?" turning to Joel.

"No, he ain't bin along of 'em since his mother's death, for there was a lady at Priestley—the only creetur as was good to my poor lass when she lay dyin'—and she was real kind, God bless 'er; and the poor gal, she died on her bosom, as they tell me; and afterward Mrs. Mordaunt—that was the lady—she took Tommy along with her up to the Court, and—"

"Tommy! The Court! Good God! do you mean to tell me that the boy you speak of, Myra Cray's child, was adopted by Mrs. Mordaunt