

"Good-night, Israel. Have you told Martha?"

"Not yet. She will fret every day till the change comes. Why should we have a hundred frets, when a dozen may do?"

But when Israel went into Martha's presence something made him change his mind. The mother had been weeping, and began to weep afresh when she saw her husband. He anticipated her sorrowful questions, and with an assumption of cheerfulness, told her what a good, brave man the captain of the ship was, and how happy and hopeful Jane and Cluny seemed to be. "It did not feel like a parting at all, Martha," he said; "and indeed there was no need for any such feeling. We are going ourselves very soon, now."

The words were spoken and could not be recalled; and he stood, in a moment, ready to face the storm they might raise. He had not intended them, but what we say and what we do beyond our intention, is often more fateful and important than all our carefully prepared words or well laid plans. Martha looked at her husband with speechless wonder and distress, and he was more moved by this attitude than by her usual garrulous anger. He sat down by her side and took her hand, saying,

"My dear Martha, I did not think of telling you this just yet, and especially to-day, but the words were at my lips, and then they were out, without my leave or license. Now there is nothing for it, but letting you know, plump and plain, that you and I, in our gathering years, must up and out of England. Oliver Cromwell is dying; when he is in the grave, what? Either Stuart, or civil war. If it is the Stuart, my head will be wanted; and as for fighting for Lambert, or even Fairfax or Sir Harry Vane, I will not do it—verily, I will not! I have fought under Crom-