

"Hast ever thought of me, lass?"

"Often, Ieuan, often; especially lately, I have wished to see thee, for I had something to say to thee."

It was not much that Mifanwy had spoken, and he had not yet heard her voice above a whisper, but he was conscious of a change in her manner, suggestive of refinement.

"Dost remember the day we parted, Mifanwy?"

"Yes," she said, bending her head still lower, "I remember it all; but, Ieuan, is it wise to recall it now?"

"No, Mifanwy, it is not wise; but—my heart rebels against this cold meeting; it is my fault, I know it is. Before God I meant to be true to thee, Mifanwy, and for years and years the thought of thee was like a breath of pure air to me—a breeze wafted from the past, that brought peace, and love, and calmness, to my soul."

"And now," she said, "it is no longer so; thou need'st not tell me, Ieuan, for though I have been separated from thee by outward circumstances and material things, inwardly we have never been divided; there is a bond between us that never can be broken, a bond of sympathy that has always made me conscious of thy feelings; and, lately, I know thou, too, hast felt that bond, but it has been irksome to thee, galling, and thou hast longed for the opportunity to break it."

Her hand played nervously with her apron string. Ieuan was silent with astonishment and trouble. True, too true, there was some invisible link that bound him to this girl; she had read his soul and had known his thoughts with an intuition that could be founded in love only—deep, true love for him—a love he was now going to repay with cold repulsion.

"Mifanwy," he stammered, "pity me, girl; what shall I do? Listen to my story and help me to decide."