

house. He was a handsome, gentlemanly young man, weather-tanned, and yet withal of frank and open countenance.

Having been introduced by Susan into the parlour where her mother was sitting, the stranger glanced round him with curiosity, and possibly with some uneasiness.

"My business," he began somewhat awkwardly, "is with Mrs. Playfair. You are that lady, madam, I understand?"

"Yes, sir, I am Mrs. Playfair. Pray be seated."

"Thank you," he said. But as he laid his hand on the back of a chair, he glanced first towards Susan and then towards the still open door.

"Oh, my daughter will not be in the way. We have no secrets, have we, Sue?" exclaimed Mrs. Playfair, interpreting her visitor's look.

"No, of course not," he stammered. "But I think perhaps I could better explain my business to one—that is to you, ma'am."

Susan bridled up a little.

"I assure you I don't want to intrude, sir. Mother, I shall be in the kitchen if you want me." So saying, she swept from the room with the pretence rather than the reality of offended dignity.

The visitor gave a sigh of relief as he closed the door after her. Then he turned, and said abruptly,

"I was anxious to spare her feelings. My name is Parkinson."

"Indeed!" responded Mrs. Playfair, raising her eyebrows in mild surprise. She did not quite see how this announcement of a name could have wounded Sue's feelings, nor did the name itself convey any particular impression to her mind for the moment.

"Yes," continued the young man in a confidential tone. "I've come from America—from British Columbia. I arrived this morning."

"Parkinson, Parkinson. Ah yes, I remember now—that was the name of Reggie Jessop's partner. He spoke most warmly of your kindness. We

shall all be glad to see you, sir. How is the poor fellow?"

"He is dead!" and the words were uttered with evident emotion. "That is why I did not like to begin speaking all at once before her. He died in my arms four weeks ago."

Mrs. Playfair was surprised.

"This will be a terrible blow to his poor mother, for she was wrapped up in him, and never let it near her that anything could happen to him. I am glad you came here first. You know we are not relations, only friends."

"Yes, I understood that," said Mr. Parkinson, "but poor Reggie spoke so much about you, specially about—about Miss Playfair, that I feared it would be a great shock—that is, I thought I'd like to tell you about it by yourself first."

Mrs. Playfair did not think the time opportune for correcting any error that might have arisen in Mr. Parkinson's mind in consequence of anything that the poor young fellow, dying far away from home and friends, might have said in his last hours. She contented herself with thanking her visitor for his consideration, and listening to the story he had to tell.

It was a sufficiently pathetic story. The two young men had met quite casually at New Westminster, and from the first they had been drawn to one another. "He reminded me," said the narrator, "of a younger brother of mine who came out with me from England, and died before we had been six months in the country. Why he took a fancy to me I cannot exactly say."

It was easy enough, thought good Mrs. Playfair, to understand how poor Reggie, out of work, in broken health, and utterly alone, would cling in gratitude and affection to the strong hand held out to him with all the tenderness and generosity of a brother.

At this point Mrs. Playfair had interrupted the story, saying she would like to call her daughter. So Susan came in, and listened in silence to all that followed. The visitor pro-