

were to return that evening and confront her husband, telling him she knew all, and daring him to return to the house into which he had insinuated himself under a false name.

Though Hope even yet desired not to expose her husband, she felt that this last discovery of his heartlessness had frozen her very soul. She no longer cared for him; it had been some other man she married; he might now take himself and his gold whither he would, to neither would she make any claim. Then she bethought herself of the ten sovereigns in her purse which she never had used—never would use for her own needs. She took them out with feverish haste, and replaced them, wrapped in a scrap of paper, in the bag whence they had been taken. After that she breathed more freely, she felt more free.

She would have one more interview with Harold, and then life was over for her as far as rejoicing in life went. She should *exist* only, a poor wrecked soul waiting on the bare rocks of desolation for deliverance. Death only could bring her relief.

She went over that coming meeting with Harold in anticipation. There should be no tears nor loud reproachings, only a cold, quiet, cutting farewell. He had wronged her beyond the bounds of forgiveness. They must part now for ever.

Then Hope braced herself for the terrible ordeal of the coming hours. How she got through them she never knew. She listened mechanically to Flora's gay chatter and Miss Furniss's more monotonous confidences. She sat down to breakfast and dinner, and ate and drank, or seemed to eat and drink, like the rest.

She learned from Flora the road by which 'Mr. Wentworth' would return with the rest from Plenty Bay, and listened breathlessly for the hour at which they might be expected. She steadied her voice to perfect firmness when she announced the time at

which she must leave in the afternoon. She would then walk boldly along the track, leaving the actual meeting with her husband to arrange itself. She should find Harold; that was all she cared for. When he saw her he would be as wishful as herself to have no witnesses to the conversation.

'But why will you not let us drive you to Plenty Bay, Mrs. Westall?' asked Miss Furniss for the second time. Hope had not heard the first question, she was so deep in her own calculations. 'Flora would enjoy it, and she would meet her father and Mr. Wentworth.'

Hope shivered.

'No, no,' she said; 'I thank you, but I would rather walk—I enjoy it,' she forced her poor lips to add.

Happily attention was distracted from the matter by a servant bringing in a freshly made cake, on which Flora had set her mind.

'Dear Mrs. Westall must take it with her.'

The girl was of a singularly guileless, loving nature; Hope could not keep her at arm's length. Nay, she kissed her fondly at parting.

'God bless you, dear! You have been good to me. I pray Him I may be able to keep you from harm.'

'Such a strange thing to say,' said Flora as she watched their visitor disappear round a curve in the road.

'My dear, she is a strange person, but nice and good I am sure. I am afraid she is in some great trouble, but I did not like to ask. She would have told me if she had wished to do so.'

So spoke kind Miss Furniss.

Meantime Hope plodded on, on towards that last meeting with her husband, waiting for the moment when she should see a cloud of dust in the distance, and horsemen drawing nearer, one of whom would be Mr. Wentworth—Harold Westall!

(To be continued.)