

the course of which Ivy's griefs were forgotten.

But though merriment was still possible at Thetfield, as much could not be said of Kingston Villa. Neither Walter nor Mary was at all prepared for what they found upon arrival there late the same night.

Only that morning had Guy at length prevailed upon Mrs. Brookes to call in the legal advice which he had for so long advocated; and truly thankful were both he and Stella to

she began, in a visible flutter of excitement. "I really think that *hafter* *hall* I needn't 'ave troubled you to come. But Guy Ryder there, 'e does nothink but fret and worry." And that whilst her own fingers were shaking nervously and the always ruddy countenance showed a purply roseate hue. "What does the Bank want along o' me?" Then, tearing open the envelope, "Guy thinks as some-think should be done about the Zarina—ah!"



"THAT IS NOT MY HANDWRITING."

see Mr. Keen, the family solicitor, enter the door. As he did so the postman ran up the steps and thrust a letter into Guy's hand, the curate happening to be the person nearest to the entrance.

"For Mrs. Brookes, and from the Bank," he remarked. "This way, I suppose, Stella?"

But Mrs. Brookes, whose senses during the last few hours had seemed preternaturally acute, had overheard the observation. She came into the hall.

"How do you do, Mr. Keen?"

It was not a scream exactly, nor precisely a gasp, that ejaculation uttered with quivering lips and whilst her eyes were still fastened upon the paper she held. But the sound alarmed the three persons who heard it, and Mr. Keen exchanged a glance with Guy. For the clergyman had himself conveyed Mrs. Brookes' message to the solicitor, whom he had persuaded at once to go with him to the Villa. And their walk thither had afforded Guy the opportunity of giving Mr. Keen some glimpses of the proceedings of the Clives, as well