

Mrs. Malherb obeyed, glanced forward, then uttered a joyful cry and dropped the budget.

"A boy—a precious little boy; and our sweet one well—quite well—before the letter sailed. 'Gloriously happy,' he says."

"I knew it! Pick up the letter. A boy! They have called him Maurice Malherb? That is certain."

She read again; then shook her head.

"Not so?" he asked with a heightened voice. "Then 'tis 'Malherb'—just the name. Yet I could have wished——"

"No, dear heart. They have not called him Malherb."

He started and flushed.

"Stark's name alone, I suppose? That is not well. I marvel they could do so improper a thing! Is it not enough that she has broken our hearthstone? Will she also forget us?"

"The little one is called John, dear Maurice—only that."

He was quite silent for a moment, staring before him. His warmth died away and then he spoke.

"Good—very good! Well thought on! I'm glad they've done that. And the dead would be glad. Perchance he is so. All is right with our girl, you say—you hide nothing?"

"All is as right as our love could wish."

"God be praised for His manifold mercies then."

She rose and came to his side.

"Do you remember, Maurice, how once you wished for Grace's firstborn, and planned and hoped that he should be a Malherb?"

"Forget it," he said. "'Tis but a fool's part to remember dreams."

He bent his head and his great square jaw hardened.

"No, no. This place follows me to the dust, and with me vanishes from man's memory for ever. None shall remember me after I have passed by, and none bear my name any more. Let it depart, like the mist of the morning, and be forgotten."

"May our grandchild be even such as you, brave heart! A man among men—generous, honest, just."

Malherb shook his head.

"Never—never. Rather pray that he follow his father. But not like me—not like me."

She put her arms round his neck and kissed him.