

Robin Hood's Barn

As she bent over Cecil to-night, her heart was full of contending emotions. She and her boy were safely sheltered under the roof of her dear cousin, Mary Brent, Cecil would soon be old enough to take possession of the manor at Cecil Point, the future was apparently bright with promise; yet she was conscious of some unsatisfied hunger of the heart, and, deeper than that, of a sense of some impending grief; but she was a woman of shaken nerves easily sunk in melancholy.

"Hark!" cried Cecil, suddenly pulling himself away from his mother's arms, — "I hear the sound of footsteps outside." At the same moment Mary Brent came slipping down the stairs.

"Elinor," she said with a little nervousness, "Giles was expecting a friend to-night."

"Ah?" said Elinor, indifferently.

"Yes; 't is a pity he was called to St. Mary's in such haste, for the friend comes on business."

"Perchance he may tarry till Giles returns."

"I hope so, — but, Elinor, — this business concerns thee."

"Me!"

"Ay, the new-comer is one who would fain have a lease of the manor at Cecil Point."

"Robin Hood's Barn? Now, Mary, have I not told thee and Giles that I would hear of no such plan? I am a woman of affairs and can well