

modesty and my confidence. Well, old man, I don't grudge you your happiness, for you deserve her, and I don't. Therefore may you live long and be happy. We shall miss you awfully in the Regiment. Little Binning, our youngest subaltern, is quite disconsolate; as for myself, I am in despair. If you hear of my committing any very heinous crime, you must forgive me, and attribute all my eccentricities of conduct to having lost my dear, sober old critic and mentor."

I showed Dicky's letter to Nell, and she insisted on my inviting him to Cattington Towers, so that we should see the last of each other before he sailed for India.

Dicky came, but just at first seemed a little embarrassed at encountering his old love. Her frank manner, however, soon succeeded in putting him completely at ease; so much so, in fact, that he even went the length of confiding to her sympathetic ear the details of a strong flirtation he had recently been carrying on with Miss Williams, who it appeared had been staying with an aunt residing in the neighbourhood of Rugby.

We parted the best of friends.

Since then the years have rolled by, and Nell and I have settled down into quite old married people. Children's sweet high voices ring in the old rooms of Cattington Towers, and from morning till night their little pattering footsteps travel up and down the long polished corridors. Mr. Austen is hale and well, but a veritable slave to the small tyrants, whose powers of persuasion he never can resist.

Nell has hardly changed at all—at least, in my eyes. She may perhaps have grown a trifle stouter and more matronly looking, but her sweet face is as sweet, and bright, and honest, as ever it was. Brighter indeed, for it now wears a look of settled content that was not always present in her girlish days, when often, in the midst of her mirth, a sad expression would throw a subtle shade upon her features.