

her patronage, and would pay her back with affection for a while, but most probably with ingratitude in the long run," said Brian.

"What did she say to that?" asked Dorcas eagerly.

"That I was uncharitable."

"She reads you well, Brian," said Dorcas; "that is the right word, 'uncharitable.' She is a clear-headed woman; she sees everything; she's as sharp as a needle, and yet as good as gold. I say, God bless her!"

"It is because Mabel Westbrook is as good as gold, that I would spare her trouble, Dorcas," said Brian; "and there must follow trouble with you, unless you have the strength to keep down all that is unjust in your nature. You will love this lady doubtless, but you will distress her very much."

"Yes, yes, that is true," Dorcas confessed slowly; "though I don't care for you to tell me."

"At all events do not let her take you to her heart without knowing the truth. Conceal nothing from her."

"I have nothing to be ashamed of, but I will not tell her everything."

"Then keep away from her," said Brian.

"It is best," said Dorcas mournfully; "but it is losing the one chance in my life—the last chance left. Where am I to go? What am I to do for the next three months?"

"Why do you mention three months in particular?" asked Brian sharply.

"After that time I see my way," was the reply. "What am I to do till then?"

"Come to the Museum and take care of my home."

"Brian," said Dorcas, between her set white teeth, "you know I would rather starve in the streets than do it—rather die. Did I not take an oath, long ago, that I would never share your home again?"

"It was a foolish oath," answered her brother; "and now the grandfather is dead, it is you who are uncharitable. We will talk of this to-morrow."

"Yes, but —"

"Miss Westbrook will wonder what has become of you."

"Let her wonder!" was the abrupt reply to this.

"And you have her good opinion to consider," added Brian.

"Ah! that's true. But she will not think any harm of me for talking to my brother for a while. There's nothing strange or wrong in that; I suppose?" she asked satirically.

"No, but we shall have time to-morrow, and I want to get home."

"You will find pleasant company waiting for you there," said Dorcas. "I am not a coward, but I would not go up to that cottage."

"The dead are harmless, Dorcas," said Brian; "it is the living that make one's heart ache."

"Do you mean that for me?" cried Dorcas, resentfully again.

"I was not thinking of your troubles just then, or of my own."

"Of Miss Westbrook's, perhaps?" said the sister.

"She has sailed by them into the open, I trust," answered Brian enthusiastically, "and a bright young life spreads out before her. Neither you nor I must help to mar it, Dorcas."

"We can agree about that at least," said Dorcas; "but why did she come to England in search of grandfather?"

"I will tell you to-morrow; it is too long and complicated a story to relate at this hour. Still, Dorcas," he said, "it may be as well to know that she came in error, and of that I have assured her. It was the Halfdays who had done harm to the Westbrooks, and not the Westbrooks to us."

"Yes, that is more likely," answered Dorcas readily.

"It was a cruel wrong, which you and I may help to right some day. You will be glad of the opportunity."

"Yes," said Dorcas, "I should be glad."

"Frankly spoken," said Brian, laying his hand upon her shoulder, "in so good a work what a good woman may be made of you yet."

"Oh! I'm good enough," she answered in her old, sullen way. "What is there to say against me?"

"Nothing," replied her brother, "so keep good—and keep strong. Good-night."

"Good-night," she echoed moodily.

He passed through the gate, and she stood aside to allow of his egress from the churchyard, looking away from him as he regarded her steadily and sorrowfully. He glanced back when he was a few yards on