

to have made Mina very happy. What more could woman want ?

One thing only, but that a necessity—somebody to talk to about it. She had nobody. Janie showed no desire to discuss Blent or anything or anybody connected therewith, and Janie out of the question there was nobody to whom loyalty allowed her to talk. The Major, for instance, was one of the enemy. She might pity him as an uncle—he was perplexed and surly, because somehow he never happened to meet Miss Iver now—but she could not confide in him. The gossips of Blentmouth were beneath her lordly notice. She was bubbling over with undiscussed impressions. And now even Mr. Neeld had gone off on a visit to town !

Yet things needed talking about, hammering out, the light of another mind thrown upon them ; for they were very difficult. There was no need to take account of Mr. Gainsborough ; as long as he could be kept in the library and out of the one curiosity shop which was to be found in Blentmouth, he could not do himself or the house much harm. He was still bewildered, but by no means unhappy, and he talked constantly of going back to town to see about everything—to-morrow. There was nothing to see about—the lawyers had done it all—and he was no more necessary or important in London than he was at Blent. But Cecily's case was another matter altogether, and it was about her that Mina desired the enlightening contact of mind with mind, in order to canvass and explain the incongruities of a behaviour which conformed to no rational or consistent theory.

Cecily had acquiesced in all the lawyers did, had signed papers at request, had allowed herself to be invested with the property, saluted with the title, enthroned in the fullest manner. So far then she had accepted her cousin's sacrifice and the transformation of her own life. Yet through and in spite of all this she maintained, even to the extreme of punctiliousness, the air of being a visitor at Blent. She was not exactly apologetic to the servants, but she thanked them profusely for any special