

nor was standing at the window just at gloaming. It was the month of March, and the ground was white, and the trees restlessly tossing their bare branches above the neglected avenue. All was still in the house, all was still in the park, except the cawing of the rooks, sailing homeward in straggling flight. Never had Eleanor been so conscious of the punishment of her sin as during that dreary day. Her father, full of trouble and anxiety, had gone to York, and had forgotten to bid her "good-by." She had long felt that she was a trouble to the two women-servants, and that they heartily wished her in her own home. All outside sympathy for her was long ago dead. She was utterly forsaken and forlorn.

She was weeping silently, and almost unconsciously, when the housemaid, a woman of forty years old, entered the room with coals to replenish the fire. Eleanor's white cheeks and hopeless air made the woman sorry for her. She set down the empty scuttle, and said, "Mistress Aske, I am grieved for thee. Why doesn't thou go and mak' up with thy husband? Depend upon it, he'll niver be able to say a cross word to thee."

"Oh, thank you, Martha! You are the only person that has had a kind word for me for so long! I would go to the squire if I knew where he was. I think I would go to the end of the world if I could only put an end to this trouble."

"Nay, then, thou need only go to thy own place. T' Squire came home yesterday; and varry old and bad he looks, so Jane Arkroyd says. I'd tell Jimmy to drive thee over to Aske, and for thy own sake and for Master Burley's sake, I'd try and put a stop to a' this worritting and waste o' good brass."

"I have a great mind to take thy advice, Martha. I am sure it is good advice. But I won't have Jimmy. If I go, no one but you shall know; then, if I fail, I am sure you will keep my fresh sorrow and shame in your own heart."

"I don't believe thou will fail; and if ta does, I'll niver say a word about it to any one. Thou can't walk to Aske, though, and in t' dark, too."

"Yes, I can. It is only four miles over the common. Many an afternoon I walk double that, without any motive but to tire myself to sleep. I'll go now, Martha; I won't wait until to-morrow. It may be wet then, and a day may make all the difference between too late and not too late."

She dressed carefully, and covered herself with one of the large mantles then worn. In a little more than an hour she was at the gates of Aske Park. It was quite dark and the gates were shut, and she had no alternative but to ring the bell and take old Geoffrey into her confidence. He listened to her with reluctance. "T' squire will never forgive me, mistress," he said, "and I doan't think it kind in thee to put an owd man like me in such a box."