

not renewed between them until some weeks after, when Harry's health was almost restored; then she ventured to inquire if he had yet spoken to his father about Robert's business.

"No," he replied, "and I can't see any need for it. Robert's gone abroad, you say, and we can't bring him back; so what's the use of getting myself into an ugly scrape for no purpose? If it would do him any good, of course I should bear it willingly." Florence did not approve of this reasoning, but her arguments and persuasions were of no avail. Her promise to Robert prevented her acting in the matter herself, so all she could do was to write kindly to Mrs. Manvers and Lucy, saying she knew Robert to be innocent. But nothing had power to comfort the poor mother since she had heard the tale of her son's departure in disgrace,—that son, who had been the pride of her heart from his earliest years. A relapse was the consequence of the excitement and grief, and for weeks her life trembled in the balance. During that period of trouble and anxiety, Lucy worked hard to support her mother, took in needlework, taught the village children, and by various means endeavoured to earn even a scanty pittance for their necessities. Months passed without bringing tidings of Robert; then years followed, full of suspense and sorrow, until his mother and sister almost lost hope of ever hearing from him, and feared he must have perished alone and friendless in that far-off land.

And what of Harry all this time? The secret of his own guilt and the consciousness of being the cause of all this distress weighed so heavily on his mind, that to drown thought he sought for constant excitement, and was led on by bad companions from one sin to another.

Florence indeed did her best to win him back to home life, but he avoided her company as much as possible, and so things went on from bad to worse. Harry never