

was engaged to be married to the girl who was a friend of his daughter's, and who had several times taken tea at the mill, was almost bewildering to him.

"I dare say you are surprised," Mr. Armstrong said, quietly, "but you see we are not exactly what we appear. We came here somewhat under false colors, to try and find out about this murder, and in the hope we might discover some proofs of Captain Mervyn's innocence. Now we have been successful we shall go up to London, and there await Captain Mervyn's return. I have been talking it over with my daughter and if you and Mrs. Powlett offer no opposition, we propose to take Ruth away to stay with us for two or three months. It will be pleasant for all parties. Your girl and mine are fond of each other, and Ruth will be a nice companion for Mary. The change will do your daughter good. She has for a long time been suffering greatly, and fresh scenes and objects of interest will take her mind off the past; and lastly, by the time she returns here, the gossip and talk that will be caused when all this is known will have died away."

"It is very good of you to think of it, Mr. Armstrong," Hiram Powlett said, "and it will be a fine thing for Ruth. Of course, she has been wrong, very wrong; but she must have suffered very much all these months. I told you that I thought that she had something on her mind, but I never thought it was like this. Well, well, I shan't say anything to her. I never was good at scolding when she was a child, and I think she has been severely punished for this already."

"I think so, too," Mr. Armstrong agreed; "and now let us go in. I told her that I should speak to you this evening, and she must be waiting anxiously for you."

When they entered, Ruth rose timidly.

"Oh! father"—she began.

"There, don't say any more about it, Ruth," Hiram interrupted, taking her tenderly in his arms. "My poor girl, you have had a hard time of it. Why didn't you tell me all at first?"

"I could not, father," she sobbed. "You know—you know—how you were set against him."

"Well, that is so, Ruth, and I should have been still more set against him if I had known the rights of that fall of yours upon the hill; but there, we won't say anything