

To his wife he did not leave a farthing: this, he said, had been arranged by her on their marriage. She was resolute that not one fraction of his property should enrich her or hers, and had peremptorily refused even the smallest gift from him. But my grandfather requested it of her as a favour, that she should make Thorold House her head-quarters for the rest of her life. Tricksy's name was not even mentioned in the will.

Mrs. Thorold *did* consent, at my father's earnest entreaty, to remain with us. She was the same gentle, placid woman as ever, though many an added line on her white forehead, many a silver hair in her brown curls, showed that she had suffered much. She led precisely the same quiet, still life as before, except that every month or two she went to town on business. What this business was no one knew, except that it was connected with the Gwyn property and the lost Tyrrell. My father had, at her request, written to India to obtain, if he could, the certificate of the marriage of John's father and mother.

I should have thought Tricksy had forgotten John entirely, but that once or twice she insisted upon riding as far as Gap Lane, as if to recall her peril and her deliverance. My father wrote to John to ask him to return. After some delay he was enabled to do so. And now again Tricksy showed she *had* retained a warm recollection of John. She and her mother prepared John's rooms for him—the rooms he had occupied before their first arrival, and which had been given to her by my grandfather.

Tricksy was almost eighteen at this time; but she might have been eight, to judge from the childish importance she attached to the replacing of every article of furniture in John's room just as he had left it. John arrived. He walked in one day, after dinner. He seemed more painfully shy than ever. Sunburnt and thin, with a beard and thick tawny hair, which had a leonine appearance, he was certainly very plain. He had, however, retained the sweetness of his eyes and that gentlemanliness of bearing which no awkwardness could wholly conceal. There seemed less difference of age between us than before, and I was very glad to welcome the honest-hearted fellow once more. But he seemed more reserved with Tricksy than ever. I could not make it out.

Her manner to him was influenced by his to her; and Tricksy was graver and more silent with him than with any other person.

As the day of her being of age approached, Mrs. Thorold informed Tricksy of the conditions under which she was to become possessed of the enormous fortune which was hers. She was to choose her husband on the day she was of age, and declare her choice publicly, or to forfeit the whole.

On the 18th of June Tricksy would be eighteen. It was now the 12th. No girl had been so much thrown into the society of men as Tricksy, and yet there was not a spark of sentiment for any one of them in her heart.

She had had dozens of proposals, and all had received the irrevocable No.

I worshipped her. My whole life, from the moment I had first seen her, had been given to her; but when I once murmured something of my love being

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