

breakfast with us. No, no, don't ring; fetch a cup yourself, my dear—fetch it yourself."

Hetty looked at him wonderingly, but she obeyed; and as the door closed upon her, Blakeford exclaimed, in quick trembling tones:

"She doesn't know—she knows nothing. Don't tell her. For God's sake don't tell her. Don't say you have."

"I have told her nothing, Mr. Blakeford," I replied.

"Don't tell her, then. Bless her, I could not bear for her to know. I won't fight, Mr. Grace, I won't fight. I'm a broken man. I'll make restitution, I will indeed; but for God's sake don't tell my child."

"Then he is not all bad," I thought, "for he does love her, and would be ashamed if she knew that he had been such a consummate villain."

And as I thought that, I recalled her brave defence of him years ago, and then wondered at the change as she entered the room.

I breakfasted with them, the old man—for, though not old in years, he was as much broken as one long past seventy—watching me eagerly, his hands trembling each time terribly as he raised his cup, while Hetty's every action, her tender solicitude for her father's wants, and the way in which she must have ignored every ill word that she had heard to his injury, filled me with delight.

He must have read my every word and look, for I have no doubt I was transparent enough, and then he must have read those of Hetty, simple, unconscious and sweet, for it did not seem to occur to her that any of the ordinary coquetries of the sex were needed; and at last, when I roused myself to the fact that Tom Girtley must be waiting breakfast, it was nearly eleven, and I rose to go.

"You are not going, Mr. Grace," said Hetty's father anxiously. "Don't go yet."

"I must, sir," I said, "but I will soon be back."

"Soon be back?" he said nervously.

"Yes, sir. And that business of ours. That settlement."

"Yes, yes," he said, with lips quivering, "it shall all be done but don't talk about it now, not before Hetty here."

"I think Hetty, Mr. Blakeford, will help the settlement most easily for us both, will you not, dear?" I said, and I drew her to my side. "There, Mr. Blakeford," I said, holding out my hand once more, "are we to be good friends?"

He tried to answer me, but no words came, and he sank back quivering with nervous trepidation in his chair.

He was better, though, in a few minutes, and when I left him he clung to my hand, his last words being: