

Lucy was really going away in a few days to Scarborough with the Miss Guests, who had been heard to say that they expected their brother to meet them there.

Only those who have known what hardest inward conflict is, can know what Maggie felt as she sat in her loneliness the evening after hearing that news from Mrs. Glegg,—only those who have known what it is to dread their own selfish desires as the watching mother would dread the sleeping-potion that was to still her own pain.

She sat without candle in the twilight, with the window wide open toward the river; the sense of oppressive heat adding itself undistinguishably to the burthen of her lot. Seated on a chair against the window, with her arm on the window-sill, she was looking blankly at the flowing river, swift with the backward-rushing tide, struggling to see still the sweet face in its unrepublishing sadness, that seemed now from moment to moment to sink away and be hidden behind a form that thrust itself between, and made darkness. Hearing the door open, she thought Mrs. Jakin was coming in with her supper, as usual; and with that repugnance to trivial speech which comes with languor and wretchedness, she shrank from turning round and saying she wanted nothing; good little Mrs. Jakin would be sure to make some well-meant remarks. But the next moment, without her having discerned the sound of a footstep, she felt a light hand on her shoulder, and heard a voice close to her saying, "Maggie!"

The face was there,—changed, but all the sweeter; the hazel eyes were there, with their heart-piercing tenderness.

"Maggie!" the soft voice said. "Lucy!" answered a voice with a sharp ring of anguish in it; and Lucy threw her arms round Maggie's neck, and leaned her pale cheek against the burning brow.

"I stole out," said Lucy, almost in a whisper, while she sat down close to Maggie and held her hand, "when papa and the rest were away. Alice is come with me. I asked her to help me. But I must only stay a little while, because it is so late."

It was easier to say that at first than to say anything else. They sat looking at each other. It seemed as if the interview must end without more speech, for speech was very diffi-