

"Poor child, how frightened she has been!" he thought, as he gently kissed her brow and smoothed her hair; but then fearing she might take advantage of this momentary weakness to make a request, he hastily resumed his seat at the window.

Edleen longed to be alone, but the newspaper seemed to be inexhaustible, and she was too confused to find a pretext for leaving the room.

"But one might give the poor soul a month's warning," she began, when the silence had lasted about half-an-hour.

"When I have said, to-morrow, it is to-morrow. Haven't you learnt that yet, Edleen?" he returned in his most cutting tone, impatiently crushed the paper in his hand, making her head and ears ache with its rustling, and strode out of the room—at last.

Mrs. Vaughan sprang to her feet and hurried upstairs. She found Kathleen alone, before her mirror, tying her hair with a red ribbon.

"Kathleen!" she said, "Kathleen dear! You must render me a great service this moment. Here! take this ring, drive to Cardigan and sell it. The stone is worth hundreds of pounds, and I want hundreds, Kathleen, you know for whom, my love! And I know you will help me, and will understand my unpardonable weakness. Buy yourself a new hat, a very showy one, that people may see why you went to Cardigan."

Kathleen stood turning the ring in her fingers. Well, though she hated the faithless Tom, she could not desert Edleen in such anxiety and distress. She would not have done it for Tom's sake; no, not to save him from going to prison. At this idea she softened, and quite forgot Temorah in thinking of Tom's pretty figure and merry voice. In that grave, stern house he was the only thing that brought life and light. And how proud she had been to him this morning! How she had repulsed irresistible Tom! Her satisfaction at her own behaviour put her in quite a generous humor, and she resolved to take care of him in secret, while she pretended to scorn him to his face. This part greatly pleased her childish vanity, and embracing Edleen, she promised to extort heaps of gold from the jeweller.

But she was destined to make the sad experience that gold is rare at all times, but particularly so when one is in want of it. The jeweller laughed outright at her so greatly overrating the stone, and gave her much less than Edleen expected. She had very nearly taken the ring back with her again. But she thought of her cousin's anxious face and probable money-difficulties. So she bought a very modest little hat, by way of not diminishing the sum any further, and came home in extremely low spirits.

Vaughan met her on the stairs, and teased her about her purchase, declaring he would have made a better choice if she had trusted him with the errand.

"Queer that such a beautiful young girl should not have better taste!"

"You don't say so! is this all?" exclaimed Edleen. "It would have been wiser to bring the stone back with you again."

"Shall I drive over and get it?"

"No, no! My God! Certainly not! Ah, money, money! Where am I to take it? I can't suck it out of my fingers!"

Kathleen opened her drawer, and took out all her small savings. "Here, Edleen, I don't want it, you know, if it can be any help to you."

"Your hardly earned money, child! For it is hardly earned! You don't like being with children. And mine are so uninteresting and stupid too. I think Tom got all the talent. There was nothing left for the others. Ah, what a child Tom was!

A genius, I tell you, a little paragon! He spoke quite well at eighteen months old, he learned to read by himself before he was five. And his questions; like a man's. The little ones never ask me anything. Poor Kathleen, how can I take this?"

"It is for Tom," said Kathleen, and a bitter smile played about her pretty mouth.

"You love him, don't you?" asked Edleen, holding the money in her hand.

"Oh, no!" A burning flush told Edleen that she had read her aright.

"But my poor child, that cannot lead to anything."

"It need not. Shan't the children drive out a little now? They make themselves so hot with running."

"How am I to thank you, Kathleen?"

"Not at all, that's the simplest way. Who thinks of money?"

"Ah, unfortunately they think a deal of it in this house. It has never been my way."

Kathleen laughed. "That's why we are such wonderful financiers. Money runs through our fingers, just as hair gets thin under an awkward hand, while a clever one makes it grow thick and glossy. With money it is the same thing. Look at the children; it is almost incredible how far money goes with them, what they can do with the few shillings they get; it must be born with them."

"I don't like it," said Edleen.

"No, of course not, it is not a sympathetic quality, but admirable and very useful all the same."

"Ah, very; Kathleen, who would have thought that we should be worse off with all this wealth around us than we were in our greatest poverty?"

"When one is unlucky, one never prospers in anything; I am very superstitious and I don't believe in the possibility of happiness for myself, Edleen. I believe that I was born unlucky, and turn where I will, ill-luck stares me in the face."

"But, child, you are so beautiful!"

"Of what use is that to me?"

"And so lovable. One cannot help loving you."

"Is that happiness? I don't see the use of it."

"It may lead to your becoming a good man's wife."

"I don't want to. What I see of matrimony does not make me anxious to run its chances."

"But to have children of one's own, Kathleen!"

"I don't like children."

"Kathleen! You used to say just the reverse."

"Did I? Then it wasn't true. I often tell stories."

"But, Kathleen!"

"Well, what's the matter? I lie very often. I say I like a thing when I detest it, and I say I don't care about a thing when I'm dying to have it. I never tell myself the truth, just as I never look in a mirror unless I am quite sure of being very pretty."

"Then you are sure rather often," laughed Edleen.

"I look very rarely in a mirror."

"Only every time you come near one."

"You horror."

"Dear me, I think that quite natural. There are so few fine pictures here that one must make up for the want by looking-glasses."

"Thank you, Edleen," said the young girl, kissing her as she stood on the threshold. "No, come in again, Edleen; it's unlikely to kiss in a door."

"Foolish child!"

"Yes, I know I am very foolish, more foolish than you can think."