

aid, "I see now."  
he said, slowly and  
ttle lad o' mine an'—his

med, "I never knew  
ed man, Tim."  
d upon his hand again.  
y at the grass with the

boant, Mester," he an-  
strained fashion. "I  
at God-a'-moighty 'ud

l," I fattered; "you  
poor girl never was  
ate."

aw says," slowly: "I  
an' so did the poor  
the matter, Mester;

hand went up to his  
and hid it, but I did  
so much of strange grief  
that I felt words would  
s not my dogged, inex-  
as sitting before me in  
in the baby's grave; it  
then history of some  
kept secret in his  
s a history very few  
I would not ques-  
tioned he meant to ex-  
plain that if he was willing  
it was best that he  
time for it, and so I let

waited very long he  
lf, as I had thought

six years ago I com-  
or less, welly about  
chap then, Mester,  
s, but I had more  
pen I wur better  
ke I wur loighter-  
to do wi' it.

more than a week  
ng woman to moind  
me, an' this young  
modest takes my  
ke th' rest o' the  
an' slattern i' her  
et loike and now  
er I says to mysen,  
trouble; an' some-  
er afterward I says  
'at's seed trouble.'  
d a soft loike brown  
i' her voice—her  
I sometimes thowt  
en i' her dress. If

she'd been born a lady she'd ha' been one o'  
th' foine sort, an' as she'd been born a fac-  
tory-lass she wur one o' th' foine sort still.  
So I took to watchin' her an' tryin' to mak'  
friends wi' her, but I never had much luck  
wi' her till one meet I was goin' home through  
th' snow, and I seed her afore fighten' th'  
drift wi' nowt but a thin shawl over her  
head; so I goes up behind her an' I says to  
her, steady and respectful, so as she wouldna  
be feart, I says—

"Lass, let me see thee home. It's bad  
weather fur thee to be out in by thysen.  
Tak' my coat an' wrop thee up in it, an' tak'  
hold o' my arm an' let me help thee along."

"She looks up right straightforrad i' my  
face wi' her brown eyes, an' I tell yo', Mester,  
I wur glad I wur a houcat man 'stead o' a  
rascal, fur them quiet eyes 'ud ha' fun my  
out afore I'd ha done sayin' my say  
meant harm.

"Thank yo' kindly Mester Hibblethwaite,  
she says, 'but dunnot tak' off th' coat fur  
me; I'm doin' pretty nicely. It is Mester  
Hibblethwaite, beant it?"

"Aye, lass, I answers, 'it's him. Mought  
I ax yo're name."

"Aye, to be suru," said she. "My  
name's Rosanna—'Sanna Brent th' folk at th'  
mill allus ca's me. I work at th' loom i' th'  
next room to thine. I've seed thee often an'  
often."

"So we walks home to her lodgings,  
an' on th' way we talks together friendly  
an' quiet loike, an' th' more we talks  
th' more I sees she's had trouble,  
an' by an' by—bein' on'y common workin'  
folk, we're straightforrad to each other in our  
plain way—it comes out what her trouble  
has been.

"Yo' p'raps wouldn't think I've been a  
married woman, Mester," she says; "but I  
ha', an' I wedded and rued. I married a  
sojer when I wur a giddy young wench, four  
years ago, an' it wur th' worst thing as ever  
I did i' aw my days. He wur one o' yo're  
handsome, fastish chaps, an' he tired o' me  
as men o' his stripe allus do tire o' poor  
lasses, an' then he ill-treated me. He wen-  
to th' Crimea after we'n been wed a year, an'  
left me to shift fur mysen. An' I heard six  
month after he wur dead. He'd never writ  
back to me nor sent me no help, but I could-  
na think he wur dead till th' letter come.  
He wur killed th' first month he wur out  
fightin' th' Rooshians. Poor fellow!  
Poor Phil! Th' Lord ha mercy on  
him!"

"That wur how I found out about her  
trouble, an' somehow it seemed to draw me  
to her, an' make me feel kindly to'ards her;  
'twur so pitiful to hear her talk about th'  
rascal, so sorrowful an' gentle, and not gi'

him a real hard word for a' he'd done. But  
that's allus th' way wi' women folk—th'  
more yo' harrys them, th' more they'll pity  
yo' an' pray for yo'. Why she wurna more  
than twenty-two then, an' she must  
ha' been nowt but a slip o' a lass when they  
wur weel.

"How's ever, Rosanna Brent an' me got to  
be good friends, an' we walked home  
together o' nights, an' talked about our  
bits o' wage and our bits o' debt,  
an' th' way that wench 'ud keep me  
up i' spirits when I wur a bit down-hearted  
about owt, wur just a wonder. She wur so  
quiet an' steady, an' when she said owt she  
meant it, an' she never said too much or too  
little. Her brown eyes allus minded me o'  
my mother, though th' old woman deed  
when I were nobbut a little chap, but I  
never seed 'Sanna Brent smile th'out thinkin'  
o' how my mother looked when I wur kneel-  
in' down sayin' my prayers after her. An'  
bein' as th' lass wur so dear to me, I made up  
my mind to ax her to be summat dearer. So  
once goin' home wi' her, I takes hold o' her  
hand an' lifts it up an' kisses it gentle—as  
gentle an' wi' summat th' same feelin' as I'd  
kiss the Good Book.

"'Sanna,' I says, 'bein' as yo've had so  
much trouble wi' yo're first chance, would  
yo' be afraid to try a second? Could  
yo' trust a mon again? Such a mon as me,  
'Sanna?"

"I wouldna be feart to trust thee, Tim,  
she answers back soft an' gentle after a man-  
ner. 'I wouldna be feart to trust thee any  
time.'

"I kisses her hand again, gentler still.  
"'God bless thee, lass,' I says. 'Does  
that mean yes?'"

"She crept up closer to me i' her sweet,  
quiet way.

"Aye, lad," she answers. "It means yes,  
an' I'll bide by it."

"An' tha shalt never rue it lass," said I,  
'Tha's given thy life to me, and I'll gie  
mine to thee, sure and true.'

"So we wur axed i' the church the next  
Sunday, an' a month fro then we wur wed,  
and if ever God's sun shone on a happy mon,  
it shone on one that day, when we come out  
o' church together—me and Rosanna—and  
went to our bit of a home to begin life again.  
I couldna tell thee, Mester—theer beane no  
words to tell how happy and peaceful we  
lived fur two year after that. My lass never  
altered her sweet ways, and I just loved her  
to make up fur what had gone by. I thanked  
God-a'-moighty fur his blessing every day  
and every day I prayed to be made worthy of  
it. And here's just where I'd like to ask a  
question, Mester, about summat that's wor-  
retted me a good deal. I dunnot want to