

think, Tom, that you had better decide your future without reference to me. I—that is—there are several things that would, I think, prevent our being happy together.'

'In short, you are tired of our engagement?'

'If you take it that way, yes.'

'Oh, you women, you women!' said Tom, bitterly; 'but Mary had walked off, and he did not follow her.'

Later that day Mary said she thought her presence was required at home. Louise looked sad, but no one made any remark on her sudden leave-taking. Only Tom, when he drove her to the dépôt, talking painfully small talk as they went, to avoid past and gone topics, wringing her hands as the train moved off, said:

'Heaven bless you, Mary; I hope one of your Mapleton fellows will make you as good a husband as I should have wished to be.'

'Thank you; I must take my chance,' says Mary, forcing back her tears till he is gone; then, dropping her veil, she cries her way home.

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A year later Mary is alone in the world. She has lost her father, and as she sits in her mourning dress she thinks of the past, and is not afraid to tell herself now, that but for her own folly she might have had good, true-hearted Tom Cowell to help her in her trouble; that, grieved as she would have been at her father's loss, she could never have been alone in the world as long as Tom had lived; and now she would be alone for ever, for, disguise it from herself as she had tried to do, she knew she loved Tom still; all other men seemed poor, weak things to her, and for Tom's sake even Mapleton did not seem such a very superior place as it had done, and in consequence, Limeton was not so horrible. She knew in her heart she had been somewhat prejudiced, and told herself that the unpleasantness of it should have counted as nothing compared with Tom's love. All this she had seen