

he contented himself with looking wise and sympathetic, and saying nothing. For he remembered that Perkins had once spoken of Joe running on the Radical side of politics, and he admitted to himself that Perkins was a far-seeing man, with a faculty of allying himself with good fortune, and drifting towards successful sides.

Aunt Martha's departure followed close on that of Amos. She had determined to sell her furniture and go back to Bevin Hall. "I lived with him twenty years, and I can live with him twenty more," she said to Edith. "Besides, I hev thee to help me, now, and when thou says yes he seems to hev forgotten to say no, though contradiction used to be natural as breathing to him."

"And you will not be so lonely, Aunt Martha, for little Joe and I will come every week to see you; and also you will be among all your old acquaintances at Market Bevin."

"I hev been a bit lonely sometimes," said Martha.

"And in any dispute I shall always agree with you. When there are two women against one man, he can't impose very much on either of them."

"As to that, it's mebbe better to hev one man ordering around than to hev to fight for your own with ivery penny tradesman you deal wi'. I hev hed a hard time wi' butchers, and grocers, and milkmen. At Bevin they know they'll hev to settle wi' Amos, and they're particular both as to quality and quantity. Bless your heart, Edith, there's no one in this world more to be pitied than a lone woman trying to mak' her awn living. If she's clever, all the fools hate her; if she isn't clever, then they cheat her. I've seen worse folks than Amos Braithwaite since I began to tak' lodgers, and I'm not sorry to be going back to Bevin."

"When may I come and see you there?"

"I sud think a week from next Wednesday, I sall hev some comfortable place for thee."

But Martha found things much worse than she had expected. The whole house had to be refurnished, and she was astonished to find that Amos took quite eagerly to the idea. He took pleasant counsel with the two women about it, and let Edith drive him here and there in search of papers, and damasks, and new ornaments. In a few weeks the old house was thoroughly renovated and refurnished, and Edith could go there and drink tea in as handsome a parlour and out of as exquisite china as at Bradley.

In the same interval, Joe and Edith were getting into closer sympathy with each other than they had ever before known. Long, loving letters, in which each told the other, not only the minutest incidents of their daily lives, but also their struggles with discouragements, weariness, their longings, resolves, successes and failures; led them gradually to understand how much of nobility there had been in each heart, unguessed by the other. Every such letter was a link of the chain binding them more closely together. They grew familiar with each other, accus-