

"I think I ought to be hanged," he said in a vexed way. "You are the only person in the world I care for, and every time I see you I plunge you into trouble. Well, this is the last time. Good-bye, Wenna!"

Almost involuntarily she put out her hand; but it was with the least perceptible gesture to bid him remain. Then she went past him; and there were tears running down her face.

"If—if you will wait a moment," she said, I will see if mamma and I can go with you to-morrow afternoon."

She went out and he was left alone. Each word that she had uttered had pierced his heart; but which did he feel the more deeply—remorse that he should have insisted on this slight and useless concession, or bitter rage against the circumstances that environed them, and the man who was altogether responsible for these? There was now at least one person in the world who greatly longed for the return of Mr. Roscorla.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### FAREWELL!

"YES, it is true," the young man said, next morning, to his cousin, "this is the last time I shall see her for many a day."

He was standing with his back to her, moodily staring out of the window.

"Well, Harry," his cousin said, gently enough, "you won't be hurt if I say it is a very good thing? I am glad to see you have so much patience and reasonableness. Indeed, I think Miss Rosewarne has very much improved you in that respect; and it is very good advice she has given you now."

"Oh yes, it is all very well to talk!" he said impatiently. "Common sense is precious easy when you are quite indifferent. Of course, she is quite indifferent, and she says, 'Don't trouble me!' What can one do but go? But if she was not so indifferent——"

He turned suddenly.

"Jue, you can't tell what trouble I am in! Do you

know that sometimes I have fancied she was not quite so indifferent—I have had the cheek to think so from one or two things she said—and then, if that were so, it is enough to drive one mad to think of leaving her. How could I leave her, Jue? If any one cared for you, would you quietly sneak off in order to consult your own comfort and convenience? Would you be patient and reasonable then?"

"Harry, don't talk in that excited way. Listen. She does not ask you to go away for your sake, but for hers."

"For her sake?" he repeated, staring. "If she is indifferent, how can that matter to her? Well, I suppose I am a nuisance to her—as much as I am to myself. There it is. I am an interloper."

"My poor boy," his cousin said, with a kindly smile, "you don't know your own mind two minutes running. During this past week you have been blown about by all sorts of contrary winds of opinion and fancy. Sometimes you thought she cared for you—sometimes no. Sometimes you thought it a shame to interfere with Mr. Roscorla; then again you grew indignant and would have slaughtered him. Now you don't know whether you ought to go away or stop to persecute her. Don't you think she is the best judge?"

"No, I don't," he said. "I think she is no judge of what is best for her, because she never thinks of that. She wants somebody by her to insist on her being properly selfish."

"That would be a pretty lesson."

"A necessary one, anyhow, with some women, I can tell you. But I suppose I must go, as she says. I couldn't bear meeting her about Eglosilyan, and be scarcely allowed to speak to her. Then when that hideous little beast comes back from Jamaica, fancy seeing them walk about together! I must cut the whole place. I shall go into the army—it's the profession open to a fool like me, and they say it won't be long open either. When I come back, Jue, I suppose you'll be Mrs. Tressider."

"I am very sorry," his cousin said, not heeding the reference to herself; "I never expected to see you so deep in trouble, Harry. But you have youth and good spirits on your side: you will get over it."

"I suppose so," he said, not very cheerfully; and then he went off to see about the carriage which was to take Wenna and himself for their last drive together.

At the same time that he was talking to his cousin, Wenna was seated at her writing-desk answering Mr. Roscorla's letter. Her brows were knit together; she was evidently labouring at some difficult and disagreeable task. Her mother, lying on the sofa, was regarding her with an amused look.

"What is the matter, Wenna? That letter seems to give you a deal of trouble."

The girl put down her pen with some trace of vexation in her face.

"Yes, indeed, mother. How is one to explain delicate matters in a letter? Every phrase seems capable of misconstruction. And then the mischief it may cause!"

"But surely you don't need to write with such care to Mr. Roscorla?"

Wenna coloured slightly, and hesitated, as she answered—

"Well, mother, it is something peculiar. I did not wish to trouble you; but after all I don't think you will vex yourself about so small a thing. Mr. Roscorla has been told stories about me. He is angry that Mr. Trelyon should visit us so often. And—and—I am trying to explain. That is all, mother."

"It is quite enough, Wenna; but I am not surprised. Of course, if foolish persons liked to misconstrue Mr. Trelyon's visits, they might make mischief. I see no harm in them myself. I suppose the young man found an evening at the inn amusing; and I can see that he likes you very well, as many other people do. But you know how you are situated, Wenna. If Mr. Roscorla objects to your continuing an acquaintance with Mr. Trelyon, your duty is clear."

"I do not think it is, mother," Wenna said, an indignant flush of colour appearing in her face. "I should not be justified in throwing over any friend or acquaintance merely because Mr. Roscorla had heard rumours. I would not do it. He ought not to listen to such things—he ought to have greater faith in me. But at the same time I have asked Mr. Trelyon not to come here so often—I have done

so already—and after to-day, mother, the gossips will have nothing to report."

"That is better, Wenna," the mother said; "I shall be sorry myself to miss the young man, for I like him; but it is better you should attend to Mr. Roscorla's wishes. And don't answer his letter in a vexed or angry way, Wenna."

She was certainly not doing so. Whatever she might be thinking, a deliberate and even anxious courtesy was visible in the answer she was sending him. Her pride would not allow her to apologize for what had been done, in which she had seen no wrong; but as to the future she was earnest in her promises. And yet she could not help saying a good word for Trelyon.

"You have known him longer than I have," she wrote, "and you know what his character is. I could see nothing wrong in his coming to see my family and myself; nor did you say anything against him while you saw him with us. I am sure you believe he is straightforward, honest, and frank; and if his frankness sometimes verges upon rudeness, he is of late greatly improved in that respect—as in many others—and he is most respectful and gentle in his manners. As for his kindness to my mother and myself, we could not shut our eyes to it. Here is the latest instance of it; although I feel deeply ashamed to tell you the story. We were returning in a small boat, and I was carelessly letting my hand drag through the water, when somehow the ring you gave me dropped off. Of course, we all considered it lost—all except Mr. Trelyon, who took the trouble to go at once all the way to Plymouth for a dredging-machine, and the following afternoon I was overjoyed to find him return with the lost ring, which I had scarcely dared hope to see again. How many gentlemen would have done so much for a mere acquaintance? I am sure if you had been here you would have been ashamed of me if I had not been grateful to him. Now, however, since you appear to attach importance to these idle rumours, I have asked Mr. Trelyon—"

So the letter went on. She would not have written so calmly if she had foreseen the passion which her ingenuous story about the dredging-machine was destined to arouse. When Mr. Roscorla read that simple narrative, he first

stared with astonishment as though she were making some foolish joke. Directly he saw she was serious, however, his rage and mortification were indescribable. Here was this young man, not content with hanging about the girl so that neighbours talked, but actually imposing on her credulity, and making a jest of that engaged ring which ought to have been sacred to her. Mr. Roscorla at once saw through the whole affair—the trip to Plymouth, the purchasing of a gipsy-ring that could have been matched a dozen times over anywhere—the return to Penzance with a cock-and-bull story about a dredging-machine. So hot was his anger that it overcame his prudence. He would start for England at once. He had taken no such resolution when he heard from the friendly and communicative Mr. Barnes that Mr. Trelyon's conduct with regard to Wenna was causing scandal; but this making a fool of him in his absence he could not bear. At any cost he would set out for England; arrange matters more to his satisfaction by recalling Wenna to a sense of her position; then he would return to Jamaica. His affairs there were already promising so well that he could afford the trip.

Meanwhile, Wenna had just finished her letter when Mr. Trelyon drove up with the carriage, and shortly afterwards came into the room. He seemed rather grave, and yet not at all sentimentally sad. He addressed himself mostly to Mrs. Rosewarne, and talked to her about the Port Isaac fishing, the emigration of the miners, and other matters. Then Wenna slipped away to get ready.

"Mrs. Rosewarne," he said, "you asked me to find out what I could about that red-faced person, you know. Well, here is an advertisement which may interest you. I came on it quite accidentally last night in the smoking-room of the hotel."

It was a marriage advertisement, cut from a paper about a week old. The name of the lady was "Katherine Ann, widow of the late J. T. Shirley, Esq., of Barrackpore."

"Yes! I was sure it was that woman!" Mrs. Rosewarne said eagerly. "And so she is married again?"

"I fancied the gay young things were here on their wedding-trip," Trelyon said carelessly. "They amused me.

I like to see turtle-doves of fifty billing and cooing on the promenade, especially when one of them wears a brown wig, has an Irish accent, and drinks brandy-and-water at breakfast. But he is a good billiard-player; yes, he is an uncommonly good billiard-player. He told me last night he had beaten the Irish Secretary the other day in the billiard-room of the House of Commons. I humbly suspect that was a lie. At least, I can't remember anything about a billiard-table in the House of Commons, and I was two or three times through every bit of it when I was a little chap, with an uncle of mine, who was a member then; but perhaps they've got a billiard-table now—who knows? He told me he had stood for an Irish borough—spent 3000*l.* on a population of 284—and all he got was a black eye and a broken head. I should say all that was a fabrication, too; indeed, I think he rather amuses himself with lies—and brandy-and-water. But you don't want to know anything more about him, Mrs. Rosewarne?"

She did not. All that she cared to know was in that little strip of printed paper; and as she left the room to get ready for the drive, she expressed herself grateful to him in such warm tones that he was rather astonished. After all, as he said to himself, he had had nothing to do in bringing about the marriage of that somewhat gorgeous person in whom Mrs. Rosewarne was so strangely interested.

They were silent as they drove away. There was one happy face amongst them, that of Mrs. Rosewarne; but she was thinking of her own affairs, in a sort of pleased reverie. Wenna was timid and a trifle sad; she said little beyond "Yes, Mr. Trelyon," and "No, Mr. Trelyon," and even that was said in a low voice. As for him, he spoke to her gravely and respectfully: it was already as if she were a mere stranger.

Had some of his old friends and acquaintances seen him now, they would have been something more than astonished. Was this young man, talking in a gentle and courteous fashion to his companion, and endeavouring to interest her in the various things around her, the same dare-devil lad who used to clatter down the main street of Eglosilyan, who knew no control other than his own unruly wishes,

and who had no answer but a mocking jest for any remonstrance?

"And how long do you remain in Penzance, Mr. Trelyon?" Mrs. Rosewarne said at length.

"Until to-morrow, I expect," he answered.

"To-morrow?"

"Yes; I am going back to Eglosilyan. You know my mother means to give some party or other on my coming of age, and there is so little of that amusement going on at our house that it needs all possible encouragement. After that I mean to leave Eglosilyan for a time."

Wenna said nothing; but her downcast face grew a little paler: it was she who was banishing him.

"By the way," he continued with a smile, "my mother is very anxious about Miss Wenna's return. I fancy she has been trying to go into that business of the Sewing Club on her own account; and in that case she would be sure to get into a mess. I know her first impulse would be to pay any money to smooth matters over; but that would be a bad beginning, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, it would," Wenna said; but somehow, at this moment, she was less inclined to be hopeful about the future.

"And as for you, Mrs. Rosewarne," he said, "I suppose you will be going home soon, now that the change seems to have done you so much good?"

"Yes, I hope so," she said; "but Wenna must go first. My husband writes to me that he cannot do without her, and offers to send Mabyn instead. Nobody seems to be able to get on without our Wenna."

"And yet she has the most curious fancy that she is of no account to anybody. Why, some day I expect to hear of the people in Eglosilyan holding a public meeting to present her with a service of plate, and an address written on parchment, with blue and gold letters."

"Perhaps they will do that when she gets married," the mother said, ignorant of the stab she was dealing.

It was a picturesque and pleasant bit of country through which they were driving; yet to two of them at least the afternoon sun seemed to shine over it with a certain sadness. It was as if they were bidding good-bye to some

beautiful scene they could scarcely expect to revisit. For many a day thereafter, indeed, Wenna seemed to recollect that drive as though it had happened in a dream. She remembered the rough and lonely road leading up sharp hills and getting down into valleys again; the masses of ferns and wild flowers by the stone walls; the wild and undulating country, with its stretches of yellow furze, its clumps of trees, and its huge blocks of grey granite. She remembered their passing into a curious little valley, densely wooded, the winding path of which was not well fitted for a broad carriage and a pair of horses. They had to watch the boughs and branches as they jolted by. The sun was warm among the foliage; there was a resinous scent of ferns about. By-and-by the valley abruptly opened on a wide and beautiful picture. Lamorna Cove lay before them, and a cold fresh breeze came in from the sea. Here the world seemed to cease suddenly. All around them were huge rocks, and wild flowers, and trees; and far up there on their left rose a hill of granite, burning red with the sunset; but down below them the strange little harbour was in shadow, and the sea beyond, catching nothing of the glow in the west, was grey, and mystic, and silent. Not a ship was visible on that pale plain; no human being could be seen about the stone quays and the cottages; it seemed as if they had come to the end of the world, and were its last inhabitants. All these things Wenna thought of in after days, until the odd and plain little harbour of Lamorna and its rocks and bushes and slopes of granite seemed to be some bit of fairyland, steeped in the rich hues of the sunset, and yet ethereal, distant, and unrecoverable.

Mrs. Rosewarne did not at all understand the silence of these young people, and made many attempts to break it up. Was the mere fact of Mr. Trelyon returning to Eglosilyan next day anything to be sad about? He was not a schoolboy going back to school. As for Wenna, she had got back her engaged ring, and ought to have been grateful and happy.

"Come now," she said, "if you purpose to drive back by the Mouse Hole, we must waste no more time here. Wenna, have you gone to sleep?"

The girl started as if she had really been asleep; then

she walked back to the carriage and got in. They drove away again without saying a word.

"What is the matter with you, Wenna? Why are you so downcast?" her mother asked.

"Oh, nothing!" the girl said hastily. "But—but one does not care to talk much on so beautiful an evening."

"Yes, that is quite true," said Mr. Trelyon, quite as eagerly, and with something of a blush; "one only cares to sit and look at things."

"Oh, indeed," said Mrs. Rosewarne, with a smile; she had never before heard Mr. Trelyon express his views upon scenery.

They drove round by the Mouse Hole, and when they came in sight of Penzance again, the bay, and the semicircle of houses, and St. Michael's Mount, were all of a pale grey in the twilight. As they drove quietly along, they heard the voices of people from time to time; the occupants of the cottages had come out for their evening stroll and chat. Suddenly, as they were passing certain huge masses of rock that sloped suddenly down to the sea, they heard another sound—that of two or three boys calling out for help. The briefest glance showed what was going on. These boys were standing on the rocks, staring fixedly at one of their companions who had fallen into the water and was wildly splashing about, while all they could do to help him was to call for aid at the pitch of their voices.

"That chap's drowning!" Trelyon said, jumping out of the carriage.

The next minute he was out on the rocks, hastily pulling off his coat. What was it he heard just as he plunged into the sea—the agonized voice of a girl calling him back?

Mrs. Rosewarne was at this moment staring at her daughter with almost a horror-stricken look on her face. Was it really Wenna Rosewarne who had been so mean; and what madness possessed her to make her so? The girl had hold of her mother's arm with both her hands, and held it with the grip of a vice; while her white face was turned to the rocks and the sea.

"Oh, mother!" she cried, "it is only a boy, and he is a man—and there is not another in all the world like him——"

"Wenna, is it you who are speaking; or a devil? The boy is drowning!"

But he was drowning no longer. He was laid hold of by a strong arm, dragged in to the rocks, and there fished out by his companions. Then Trelyon got up on the rocks, and calmly looked at his dripping clothes.

"You are a nice little beast, you are!" he said to the small boy, who had swallowed a good deal of salt water, but was otherwise quite unhurt.

"How do you expect I am going home in these trousers? Perhaps your mother'll pay me for a new pair, eh? And give you a jolly good thrashing for tumbling in? Here's a half-crown for you, you young ruffian; and if I catch you on these rocks again, I'll throw you in and let you swim for it—see if I don't."

He walked up to the carriage, shaking himself, and putting on his coat as he went, with great difficulty.

"Mrs. Rosewarne, I must walk back—I can't think of——"

He uttered a short cry. Wenna was lying as one dead in her mother's arms, Mrs. Rosewarne vainly endeavouring to revive her. He rushed down the rocks again to a pool, and soaked his handkerchief in the water; then he went hurriedly back to the carriage, and put the cool handkerchief on her temples and on her face.

"Oh, Mr. Trelyon, do go away, or you will get your death of cold!" Mrs. Rosewarne said. "Leave Wenna to me. See, there is a gentleman who will lend you his horse, and you will get to your hotel directly."

He did not even answer her. His own face was about as pale as that of the girl before him, and hers was that of a corpse. But by-and-by strange tremors passed through her frame; her hands tightened their grip of her mother's arm, and, with a sort of shudder, she opened her eyes and fearfully looked around. She caught sight of the young man standing there; she scarcely seemed to recognize him for a moment. And then, with a quick nervous action, she caught at his hand and kissed it twice, hurriedly and wildly; then she turned to her mother, hid her face in her bosom, and burst into a flood of tears. Probably the girl scarcely knew all that had taken place; but her two com-

panions, in silence, and with a great apprehension filling their hearts, saw and recognized the story she had told.

"Mr. Trelyon," said Mrs. Rosewarne, "you must not remain here."

Mechanically he obeyed her. The gentleman who had been riding along the road had dismounted, and, fearing some accident had occurred, had come forward to offer his assistance. When he was told how matters stood, he at once gave Trelyon his horse to ride in to Penzance; and then the carriage was driven off also, at a considerably less rapid pace.

That evening Trelyon, having got into warm clothes and dined, went along to ask how Wenna was. His heart beat hurriedly as he knocked at the door. He had intended merely making the inquiry, and coming away again; but the servant said that Mrs. Rosewarne wished to see him.

He went upstairs, and found Mrs. Rosewarne alone. These two looked at each other; that single glance told everything. They were both aware of the secret that had been revealed.

For an instant there was dead silence between them; and then Mrs. Rosewarne, with a great sadness in her voice, despite its studied calmness, said—

"Mr. Trelyon, we need say nothing of what has occurred. There are some things that are best not spoken of. But I can trust to you not to seek to see Wenna before you leave here. She is quite recovered—only a little nervous, you know, and frightened. To-morrow she will be quite well again."

"You will bid her good-bye for me," he said.

But for the tight clasp of the hand between these two, it was an ordinary parting. He put on his hat and went out. Perhaps it was the cold sea air that had made his face so pale.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## MABYN DREAMS.

"YES, mother," said Mabyn, bursting into the room, "here I am; and Jennifer's downstairs, with my box; and I am to stay with you here for another week or a fortnight; and Wenna's to go back at once, for the whole world is convulsed because of Mr. Trelyon's coming of age; and Mrs. Trelyon has sent and taken all our spare rooms; and father says Wenna must come back directly, for it's always 'Wenna, do this,' and 'Wenna, do that;' and if Wenna isn't there, of course the sky will tumble down on the earth—mother, what's the matter, and where's Wenna!"

Mabyn was suddenly brought up in the middle of her voluble speech by the strange expression on her mother's face.

"Oh, Mabyn, something dreadful has happened to our Wenna?"

Mabyn turned deadly white.

"Is she ill?" she said, almost in a whisper.

"No, not ill; but a great trouble has fallen on her."

Then the mother, in a low voice, apparently fearful that any one should overhear, began to tell her younger daughter of all she had learnt within the past day or two—how young Trelyon had been bold enough to tell Wenna that he loved her; how Wenna had dallied with her conscience and been loth to part with him; how at length she had as good as revealed to him that she loved him in return; and how she was now overwhelmed and crushed beneath a sense of her own faithlessness and the impossibility of making reparation to her betrothed.

"Only to think, Mabyn," said the mother, in accents of despair, "that all this distress should have come about in such a quiet and unexpected way! Who could have foreseen it? Why, of all people in the world, you would have thought our Wenna was the least likely to have any misery of this sort; and many a time, don't you remember, I used to say it was so wise of her getting engaged to a prudent and elderly man, who would save her from the plagues and trials that young girls often suffer at the hands of their