

Dora, still choked with tears, could not speak. With shaking hands she searched for a bit of veil she had with her to hide her eyes and cheeks. But she could not find it.

'Don't go down Market Street,' he said, after a shy look at her. 'Come this way, there isn't such a crowd.'

And turning down Mosley Street, all the way he guided her through some side streets where there were fewer people to stare. Such forethought, such gentleness in him were quite new to her. She gradually recovered herself, feeling all the while this young sympathetic presence at her side—dreading lest it should desert her.

He meanwhile was still under the tremor and awe of the new experience. So this was dying! He remembered 'Lias holding Margaret's hand. *'Deein 's long—but it's varra, varra peaceful.'* Not always, surely! There must be vigorous, tenacious souls that went out with tempests and agonies; and he was conscious of a pang of fear, feeling himself so young and strong.

Presently he led her into St. Ann's Square, and then they shook hands. He hurried off to his business, and she remained standing a moment on the pavement outside the church which makes one side of the square. An impulse seized her—she turned and went into the church instead of going home.

There, in one of the old oak pews where the little tarnished plates still set forth the names of their eighteenth-century owners, she fell on her knees and wrestled with herself and God.

She was very simple, very ignorant, but religion, as religion can, had dignified and refined all the elements of character. She said to herself in an agony—that he *must* love her—that she had loved him in truth all along. And then a great remorse came upon her—the spiritual glory she had just passed through closed round her again. What! she could see the heaven opened—the Good Shepherd stoop to take his own—and then come away to feel nothing but this selfish, passionate craving? Oh, she was ashamed, she loathed herself!

*Lucy!*—Lucy had no claim! should have no claim! He did not care for her.

Then again the pale dead face would flash upon her with its submissive look,—so much gratitude for so little, and such a tender ease in dying! And she possessed by all these bad and jealous feelings, these angry desires, fresh from such a presence!

*'Oh! Lamb of God—Lamb of God—that takest away the sins of the world!'*

#### CHAPTER VI

AND David, meanwhile, was thinking of nothing in the world but the fortunes of a little shop, about twelve feet square, and of the stall outside that shop. The situation—for a hero—is certainly one of the flattest conceivable. Nevertheless it has to be faced.

If, however, one were to say that he had marked none of Lucy Purcell's advances, that would be to deny him eyes as well as susceptibilities. He had, indeed, said to himself in a lordly way that Lucy Purcell was a regular little flirt, and was beginning those ways early. But a certain rough young modesty, joined with a sense of humour at his own expense, prevented him from making any more of it, and he was no sooner in his own den watching for customers than Lucy vanished from his mind altogether. He thought much more of Purcell himself, with much vengeful chuckling and speculation.

As for Dora, he had certainly begun to regard her as a friend. She had sense and experience, in spite of her Ritualism, whereas Lucy in his eyes had neither. So that to run into the Parlour, after each new day was over, and discuss with Daddy and her the ups and downs, the fresh chances and prospects of his infant business, was pleasant enough. Daddy and he met on the common ground of wishing to make the world uncomfortable for Purcell; while Dora supplied the admiring uncritical wonder, in which, like a warm environment, an eager temperament expands, and feels itself under the stimulus more inventive and more capable than before.

But marrying! The lad's careless good-humoured laugh under Ancrum's probings was evidence enough of how the land lay. Probably at the bottom of him, if he had examined, there lay the instinctive assumption that Dora was one of the girls who are not likely to marry. Men want them for sisters, daughters, friends—and then go and fall in love with some minx that has a way with her.

Besides, who could be bothered with 'gells,' when there was a stall to be set out and a career to be made? With that stall, indeed, David was truly in love. How he fingered and meddled with it!—setting out the cheap reprints it contained so as to show their frontispieces, and strewing among them, in an artful disorder, a few rare local pamphlets, on which he kept a careful watch, either from the door or from inside. Behind these, again, within the glass, was a precious shelf, containing in the middle of it about a dozen volumes of a kind dear to a collector's eye—thin volumes in shabby boards, then just beginning to be sought after—the first editions of nineteenth-century poets. For months past David had been hoarding up a few in a corner of his little lodging, and on his opening day they decoyed him in at least five inquiring souls, all of whom stayed to talk a bit. There was a 'Queen Mab,' and a 'Lyrical Ballads;' an 'Endymion;' a few Landors thrown in, and a 'Bride of Abydos'—this last not of much account, for its author had the indiscretion, from the collector's point of view, to be famous from the beginning, and so to flood the world with large editions.

Round and about these dainty morsels were built in with solid rubbish, with Daddy's 'Journals of Theology,' 'British Controversialist,' and the rest. In one top corner lurked a few battered

and cut-down Elzevirs, of no value save to the sentiment of the window, while a good many spaces were filled up with some new and attractive editions of standard books just out of copyright, contributed, these last, by the enterprising traveller of a popular firm, from whom David had them on commission.

Inside, the shop was of the roughest: a plank or two on a couple of trestles served for a counter, and two deal shelves, put up by David, ran along the wall behind. The counter held a few French scientific books, very fresh, and 'in the movement,' the result of certain inquiries put by old Barbier to a school friend of his, now professor at the Sorbonne—meant to catch the 'college people'; while on the other side lay some local histories of neighbouring towns and districts, a sort of commodity always in demand in a great expanding city, where new men have risen rapidly and families are in the making. For these local books the lad had developed an astonishing *flair*. He had the geographical and also the social instincts which the pursuit of them demands.

On his first day David netted in all a profit of seventeen shillings and twopence, and at night he curled himself up on a mattress in the little back kitchen, with an old rug for covering and a bit of fire, and slept the sleep of liberty.

In a few days more several of the old-established book-buyers of the town, a more numerous body, perhaps, in Manchester than in other northern centres, had found him out: a certain portly and wealthy lady, connected with one of the old calico-printing families, a person of character, who made a hobby of Lancashire Nonconformity, had walked into the shop, and given the boyish owner of it much good advice and a few orders; the Earl of Driffield had looked in, and, caught by the lures of the stall, customers had come from the most unlikely quarters, desiring the most heterogeneous wares. The handsome, intelligent young fellow, with his out-of-the-way strains of knowledge, with his frank self-conceit and his equally frank ignorance, caught the fancy of those who stayed to talk with him. A certain number of persons had been already taken with him in Purcell's shop, and were now vastly amused by the lad's daring and the ambitious range of his first stock.

As for Lord Driffield, on the first occasion when he had dropped in he had sat for an hour at least, talking and smoking cigarettes across David's primitive counter.

This remarkable person, of whom Luey thought so little, was well known, and had been well known, for a good many years, to the booksellers of Manchester and Liverpool. As soon as the autumn shooting season began, Purcell, for instance, remembered Lord Driffield, and began to put certain books aside for him. He possessed one of the famous libraries of England, and he not only owned but read. Scholars all over Europe took toll both of his books and his brains. He lived to collect and to be consulted. There was almost nothing he did not know, except how to make

a book for himself. He was so learned that he had, so to speak, worked through to an extreme modesty. His friends, however, found nothing in life so misleading as Lord Driffield's diffidence.

At the same time Providence had laid upon him a vast family estate, and an aristocratic wife, married in his extreme youth to please his father. Lady Driffield had the ideas of her caste, and when they came to their great house near Stalybridge, in the autumn, she insisted on a succession of proper guests, who would shoot the grouse in a proper manner, and amuse her in the evenings. For, as she had no children, life was often monotonous, and when she was bored she had a stately way of making herself disagreeable to Lord Driffield. He therefore did his best to content her. He received her guests, dined with them in the evenings, and despatched them to the moors in the morning. But between those two functions he was his own master; and on the sloppy November afternoons he might as often as not be seen trailing about Manchester or Liverpool, carrying his slouching shoulders and fair spectacled face into every bookseller's shop, good, bad, and indifferent, or giving lectures, mostly of a geographical kind, at popular institutions—an occupation in which he was not particularly effective.

David had served him, once or twice, in Half Street, and had sent a special notice of his start and his intentions to Benet's Park, the Driffields' 'place.' Lord Driffield's first visit left him quivering with excitement, for the earl had a way of behaving as though everybody else were not only his social, but his intellectual equal—even a lad of twenty, with his business to learn. He would sit pleasantly smoking and asking questions—a benevolent, shabby person, eager to be informed. Then, when David had fallen into the trap, and was holding forth—proud, it might be, of certain bits of knowledge which no one else in Manchester possessed—Lord Driffield would throw in a gentle comment, and then another and another, till the trickle became a stream, and the young man would fall blankly listening, his mouth opening wider and wider. When it was over, and the earl, with his dragged umbrella, had disappeared, David sat, crouched on his wooden stool, consumed with hot ambition and wonder. How could a man know so much—and an earl, who didn't want it? For a few hours, at any rate, his self-conceit was dashed. He realised dimly what it might be to know as the scholar knows. And that night, when he had shut the shutters, he vowed to himself, as he gathered his books about him, that five hours was enough sleep for a strong man; that *learn* he must and should, and that some day or other he would hold his own, even with Lord Driffield.

How he loved his evenings—the paraffin lamp glaring beside him, the crackling of the coal in his own fire, the book on his knee! Ancrum had kept his promise, and was helping him with his Greek; but his teaching hardly kept pace with the boy's enthusiasm and capacity. The *voracity* with which he worked at

his Thucydides and Homer left the lame minister staring and sighing. The sound of the lines, the roll of the *oi's* and *ou's* was in David's ear all day, and to learn a dozen irregular verbs in the interval between two customers was like the gulping of a dainty.

Meanwhile, as he collected his English poets he read them. And here was a whole new world. For in his occupation with the Encyclopædists he had cared little for poetry. The reaction against his Methodist fit had lasted long, had developed a certain contempt for sentiment, a certain love for all sharp, dry, calculable things, and for the tone of *irony* in particular. But in such a nature such a phase was sure to pass, and it was passing. Burns, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson—now he was making acquaintance piecemeal with them all, as the precious volumes turned up, which he was soon able to place with a precision which tore them too soon out of his hands. The Voltairean temper in him was melting, was passing into something warmer, subtler, and more restless.

But he was not conscious of it. He was as secular, as cocksure, as irritating as ever, when Ancrum probed him on the subject of the Hall of Science or the various Secularist publications which he supported.

'Do you call yourself an atheist now, David?' said Ancrum one day, in that cheerful, half-ironic tone which the young book-seller resented.

'I don't call myself anything,' said David, stoutly. 'I'm all for this world; we can't know anything about another. At least, that's my opinion, sir—no offence to you.'

'Oh, dear me, no offence! There have been a *few* philosophers, you know, Davy, since Voltaire. There's a person called Kant; I don't know anything about him, but they tell me he made out a very pretty case, on the practical side anyway, for a God and immortality. And in England, too, there have been two or three persons of consequence, you remember, like Coleridge and John Henry Newman, who have thought it worth while to believe a little. But you don't care about that?'

The lad stood silent a moment, his colour rising, his fine lip curling. Then he burst out:

'What's the good of thinking about things by the wrong end? There's such a lot to read!'

And with a great stretch of all his young frame he fell back on the catalogue he was looking through, while Ancrum went on turning over a copy of 'The Reasoner,' a vigorous Secularist paper of the day, which he had found on the counter, and which had suggested his question.

*Knowledge—success*: it was for these that David burned, and he laid rapid hands upon them. He had a splendid physique, and at this moment of his youth he strained it to the utmost. He grudged the time for sleep and meals, and on Saturday afternoons, the early-closing day of Manchester, he would go out to country

sales, or lay plans for seeing the few considerable libraries—Lord Driffield's among them—which the neighbouring districts possessed. On Sunday he read from morning till night, and once or twice his assistant John, hammering outside for admittance in the winter dark, wakened the master of the shop from the rickety chair where he had fallen asleep over his books in the small hours of the morning.

His assistant! It may well be asked what a youth of twenty, setting up on thirty pounds capital in a small shop, wanted with an assistant before he had any business to speak of. The story is a curious one.

Some time in the previous summer Daddy had opened a smoking and debating room at the Parlour, by way of keeping his *clientèle* together and giving a special character to the place. He had merely boarded off a bit of the original seed warehouse, put in some rough tables and chairs, and a few newspapers. But by a conjunction of circumstances the place had taken a Secularist character, and the weekly debates which Daddy inaugurated were, for a time at least, well attended. Secularism, like all other forms of mental energy, had lately been active in Manchester; there had been public discussions between Mr. Holyoake and Mr. Bradlaugh as to whether Secularism were necessarily atheistic or no. Some of the old newspapers of the movement, dating from Chartist days, had recently taken a new lease of life; and combined with the protest against theology was a good deal of co-operative and republican enthusiasm. Lomax, who had been a Secularist and an Owenite for twenty years, and who was a republican to boot, threw himself into the *mêlée*, and the Parlour debates during the whole of the autumn and winter of '69-70 were full of life, and brought out a good many young speakers, David Grieve among them. Indeed, David was for a time the leader of the place, so ready was his gift, so confident and effective his personality.

On one occasion in October he was holding forth on 'Science—the true Providence of Life.' The place was crowded. A well-known Independent had been got hold of to answer the young Voltairean, and David was already excited, for his audience was plying him with interruptions, and taxing to the utmost a natural debating power.

In the midst of it a printer's devil from the restaurant outside, a stout, stupid-looking lad, found his way in, and stood at the door listening. The fine classical head of the speaker, the beautiful voice, the gestures so free and flowing, the fire and fervour of the whole performance—these things left him gaping.

'Who's that?' he ventured to inquire of a man near him, a calico salesman, well known in the Salford Conservative Association, who had come to support the Independent speaker.

The man laughed.

'That's young Grieve, assistant to old Purcell, Half Street. He talks a d—d lot of stuff—blasphemous stuff, too; but if

somebody 'd take and teach him and send him into Parliament, some day he'd make 'em skip, I warrant yo. I never heard onybody frame better for public speaking, and I've heard a lot.'

The printer's devil stayed and stared through the debate. Then, afterwards, he began to haunt the paths of this young Satan, crept up to him in the news-room, skulked about him in the restaurant. At last David took notice of him, and they made friends.

'Have you got anybody belonging to you?' he asked him, shortly.

'No,' said the boy. 'Father died last spring; mother was took with pleurisy in November—'

But the words stuck in his throat, and he coughed over them.

'All right,' said David; 'come for a walk Sunday afternoon?'

So a pretty constant companionship sprang up between them.

John Dalby came of a decent stock, and was still, as it were, under the painful and stupefying surprise of those bereavements which had left him an orphan. His blue eyes looked bewildered at the world; he was bullied by the compositors he worked under. Sometimes he had violent fits of animal spirits, but in general he was dull and silent, and no one could have guessed that he often read poetry and cried himself to sleep in the garret where he lodged. Physically he was a great, overgrown creature, not, in truth, much younger than David. But while David was already the man, John was altogether in the tadpole-stage—a being of large, ungainly frame, at war with his own hands and feet, his small eyes lost in his pink, spreading cheeks, his speech shy and scanty. Yet, such as he was, David found a use for him. Temperaments of the fermenting, expansive sort want a listener at the moment of early maturity, and almost any two-legged thing with the listener's gift will do. David worked off much steam on the Saturday or Sunday afternoons, when the two would push out into the country, walking some twenty miles or so for the sheer joy of movement. While the one talked and declaimed, ploughing his violent way through the soil of his young thought, the other, fat and silent, puffed alongside, and each in his own way was happy.

Just about the time David was dismissed by Purcell, John's apprenticeship came to an end. When he heard of the renting of the shop in Potter Street, he promptly demanded to come as assistant.

'Don't be a fool!' said David, turning upon him; 'what should I want with an assistant in that bit of a place? And I couldn't pay you, besides, man.'

'Don't mind that,' said John, stoutly. 'I'd like to learn the trade. Perhaps you'll set up a printing business by-and-by. Lots of booksellers do. Then I'll be handy.'

'And how the deuce are you going to live?' cried David, somewhat exasperated by these unpractical proposals. 'You're not

exactly a grasshopper; and his eye, half angry, half laughing, ran over John's plump person.

To which John replied, undisturbed, that he had got four pounds still of the little hoard his mother had left him, and, judging by what David had told him of his first months in Manchester, he could make that last for living a good while. When he had learnt something of the business with David, he would move on—trust him.

Whereupon David told him flatly that *he* wasn't going to help him waste his money, and sent him about his business.

On the very day, however, that David opened, he was busy in the shop, when he saw John outside at the stall, groaning under a bundle.

'It's Mr. Lomax ha sent you this,' said the lad, calmly, 'and I'm to put it up, and tell him how your stock looks.'

The bundle contained Daddy's contributions to young Grieve's window, which at the moment were very welcome; and David in his gratitude instructed the messenger to take back a cordial message. The only notice John took was to lift up two deal shelves that were leaning against the wall of the shop, and to ask where they were to go.

And, say what David would, he stuck, and would not be got rid of. With the Lancashire accent he had also the Lancashire persistence, and David after a while gave in, consented that he should stay for some weeks, at any rate, and then set to work to teach him, in a very impatient and intermittent way. For watching and bargaining at the stall, at any rate, for fetching and carrying, and for all that appertains to the carrying and packing of parcels, John presently developed a surprising energy. David's wits were thereby freed for the higher matters of his trade, while John was beast of burden. The young master could work up his catalogues, study his famous collections, make his own bibliographical notes, or run off here and there by 'bus or train in quest of books for a customer; he could swallow down his Greek verbs or puzzle out his French for Barbier in the intervals of business; the humbler matters of the shop prospered none the less.

Meanwhile both lads were vegetarians and teetotalers; both lived as near as might be on sixpence a day; and an increasing portion of the Manchester world—of that world, at any rate, which buys books—began, as the weeks rolled on, to take interest in the pair and their venture.

Christmas came, and David made up his accounts. He had turned over the whole of his capital in six weeks, had lived and paid his rent, and was very nearly ten pounds to the good. On the evening when he made this out he sat jubilantly over the fire, thinking of Louie. Certainly it would be soon time for him to send for Louie at this rate. Yet there were *pros* and *cons*. He would have to look after her when she did come, and there would be an end of his first freedom. And what would she find to do?

Silk-weaving had been decaying year by year in Manchester, and for hand-loom weaving, at any rate, there was no opening at all.

No matter! With his prosperity there came a quickening of the sense of kinship, which would not let him rest. For the first time for many years he thought often of his father. Who and what had his mother been? Why had Uncle Reuben never spoken of his parents, save that one tormented word in the dark? Why, his father could not have been thirty when he died! Some day he would make Uncle Reuben tell all the story—he would know, too, where his father was buried.

And meanwhile, in a few more weeks, he would write to Kinder. He would be good to Louie—he decidedly meant that she should have a good time. Perhaps she had grown out of her tricks by now. Tom said she was thought to be uncommon handsome. David made a little face as he remembered that. She would be all the more difficult to manage.

Yet all the time David Grieve's prosperity was the most insecure growth imaginable.

One evening Lucy rushed in late to see Dora.

'Oh, Dora! Dora! Put down your work at once and listen to me.'

Dora looked up in amazement, to see Lucy's little face all crimson with excitement and resolution.

'Dora, I've found it all out: he's going to buy the house over Mr. Grieve's head, and turn him into the street, just as he's got nicely settled. Oh! he's done it before, I can tell you. There was a man higher up Half Street he served just the same. He's got the money, and he's got the spite. Well now, Dora, it's no good staring. Has Mr. Grieve been up here lately?'

'No; not lately,' said Dora, with an involuntary sigh. 'Father's been to see him. He says he's that busy he can't come out. But, Lucy, how do you know all this?'

Whereupon, at first, Lucy wouldn't tell; but being at bottom intensely proud of her own cleverness at last confessed. She had been for long convinced that her father meant mischief to young Grieve, and had been on the watch. A little listening at doors here, and a little prying into papers there, had presently given her the clue. In a private drawer, unlocked by chance, she had found a solicitor's letter containing the full description of No. 15 Potter Street, and of some other old houses in the same street, soon to be sold and rebuilt. The description contained notes of price and date in her father's hand. That very evening the solicitor in question had come to see her father. She had been sent upstairs, but had managed to listen all the same. The purchase—whatever it was—was to be concluded 'shortly.' There had been much legal talk, and her father had seemed in a particularly good temper when Mr. Vance went away.

'Well now, look here,' said Lucy, frowning and biting her lips;

'I shall just go right on and see him. I thought I might have found him here. But there's no time to lose.'

Dora had bent over her frame again, and her face was hidden.

'Why, it's quite late,' she said, slowly; 'the shop will be shut up long ago.'

'I don't care—I don't care a bit,' cried Lucy. 'One can't think about what's proper. I'm just going straight away.'

And she got up feverishly, and put on her hat again.

'Why can't you tell father and send him? He's downstairs in the reading-room,' said Dora.

'I'll go myself, Dora, thank you,' said Lucy, with an obstinate toss of her head, as she stood before the old mirror over the mantelpiece. 'I dare say you think I'm a very bold girl. It don't matter.'

Then for a minute she became absorbed in putting one side of her hair straight. Dora, from behind, sat looking at her, needle in hand. The gaslight fell on her pale, disturbed face, showed for an instant a sort of convulsion pass across it which Lucy did not see. Then she drew her hand along her eyes, with a low, quivering breath, and went back to her work.

As Lucy opened the door, however, a movement of anxiety, of conscience, rose in Dora.

'Lucy, shall I go with you?'

'Oh, no,' said Lucy, impatiently. 'I know what's what, thank you, Dora. I'll take care of myself. Perhaps I'll come back and tell you what he says.'

And she closed the door behind her. Dora did not move from her work; but her hand trembled so that she made several false stitches and had to undo them.

Meanwhile Lucy sped along across Market Street and through St. Ann's Square. Her blood was up, and she could have done anything, braved anybody, to defeat her father and win a smile from David Grieve. Yet, as she entered Potter Street, she began to quake a little. The street was narrow and dark. On one side the older houses had been long ago pulled down and replaced by tall warehouses, which at night were a black and towering mass, without a light anywhere. The few shops opposite closed early, for in the office quarter of Manchester there is very little doing after office hours, when the tide of life ebbs outwards.

Lucy looked for No. 15, her heart beating fast. There was a light in the first floor, but the shop-front was altogether dark. She crossed the street, and, lifting a shaking hand, rang the bell of the very narrow side door.

Instantly there were sounds inside—a step—and David stood on the threshold.

He stared in amazement at his unwonted visitor.

'Oh, Mr. Grieve—please—I've got something to tell you. Oh, no, I won't come in—we can stand here, please, out of the wind. But father's going to buy this place over your head, and I thought

I'd better come and tell you. He'll be pretty mad if he thinks I've let out; but I don't care.'

She was leaning against the wall of the passage, and David could just see the defiance and agitation on her face by the light of the gas-lamp outside.

He himself gave a low whistle.

'Well, that's rather strong, isn't it, Miss Purcell?'

'It's mean—it's abominable,' she cried. 'I vowed I'd stop it. But I don't know what he'll do to me—kill me, most likely.'

'Nobody shall do anything to you,' said David, decidedly. 'You're a brick. But look here—can you tell me anything more?'

She commanded herself with great difficulty, and told all she knew. David leant against the wall beside her, twisting a meditative lip. The situation was ominous, certainly. He had always known that his tenure was precarious, but from various indications he had supposed that it would be some years yet before his side of the street was much meddled with. That old fox! He must go and see Mr. Ancrum.

A passion of hate and energy rose within him. Somehow or other he would pull through.

When Lucy had finished the tale of her eavesdroppings, the young fellow shook himself and stood erect.

'Well, I *am* obliged to you, Miss Purcell. And now I'll just go straight off and talk to somebody that I think 'll help me. But I'll see you to Market Street first.'

'Oh!—somebody will see us!' she cried in a fever, 'and tell father.'

'Not they; I'll keep a look out.'

Then suddenly, as they walked along together, a great shyness fell upon them both. Why had she done this thing, and run the risk of her father's wrath? As David walked beside her, he felt for an instant, through all his gratitude, as though some one had thrown a lasso round him, and the cord were tightening. He could not have explained the feeling, but it made him curt and restive, absorbed, apparently, in his own thoughts. Meanwhile Lucy's heart swelled and swelled. She *did* think he would have taken her news differently—have made more of it and her. She wished she had never come—she wished she had brought Dora. The familiar consciousness of failure, of insignificance, returned, and the hot tears rose in her eyes.

At Market Street she stopped him hurriedly.

'Don't come any farther. I can get home.'

David, meanwhile, was saying to himself that he was a churlish brute; but for the life of him he could not get out any pretty speeches worthy of the occasion.

'I'm sure I take it most kind of you, Miss Purcell. There's nothing could have saved me if you hadn't told. And I don't know whether I can get out of it now. But if ever I can do anything for you, you know—'

'Oh, never mind!—never mind!' she said, incoherently, stabbed by his constraint. 'Good night.'

And she ran away into the darkness, choked by the sorest tears she had ever shed.

David, meanwhile, went on his way to Ancrum, scourging himself. If ever there was an ungrateful cur, it was he! Why could he find nothing nice to say to that girl in return for all her pluck? Of course she would get into trouble. Coming to see him at that time of night, too! Why, it was splendid!

Yet, all the same, he knew perfectly well that if she had been there beside him again, he would have been just as tongue-tied as before.

## CHAPTER VII

On the following night David walked into the Parlour about eight o'clock, hung up his hat with the air of an emperor, and looked round for Daddy.

'Look here, Daddy! I've got something to say to you, but not down here: you'll be letting out my private affairs, and I can't stand that.'

'Well, come upstairs, then, you varmint! You're a poor sort of fellow, always suspecting your friends. Come up—come up with you! I'll humour you!'

And Daddy, bursting with curiosity, led the way upstairs to Dora's sitting-room. Dora was moving about amid a mass of silks, which lay carefully spread out on the table, shade melting into shade, awaiting their transference to a new silk case she had been busy upon.

As the door opened she look up, and when she saw David her face flushed all over.

Daddy pushed the lad in.

'Dora, he's got some news. Out with it, sir!'

And he stood opposite the young fellow, on tiptoe, quivering with impatience.

David put both hands in his pockets, and looked out upon them, radiant.

'I think,' he said slowly, 'I've scotched old Purcell this time. But perhaps you don't know what he's been after?'

'Lucy was in here last night,' said Dora, hesitating; 'she told me about it.'

'Lucy!' cried Daddy, exasperated. 'What have you been making secrets about? I'll have no secrets from me in this house, Dora. Why, when Lucy tells you something important, is it all hidden up from me? Nasty close ways!'

And he looked at her threateningly.

Nothing piqued the old Bohemian so much as the constant assumption of the people about him that he was a grown-up baby,