

'Louie, the child is tired out!' said David, trying to quiet Cécile and dry her tears. 'What was that for?'
Louie's chest heaved.

'Because she won't do what I tell her,' she said fiercely. 'What am I to do with her when she grows up? Who'll ever look at her twice?'

She scowled at the child who had taken refuge on David's knee, then with a sudden change of expression she held out her arms, and said imperiously:

'Give her to me.'

David relinquished her, and the mother took the little trembling creature on her knee.

'Be quiet then,' she said to her roughly, always in French, 'I didn't hurt you. There! *Veux-tu du gâteau?*'

She cut some with eager fingers and held it to Cécile's lips. The child turned away, silently refusing it, the tears rolling down her cheeks. The mother devoured her with eyes of remorse and adoration, while her face was still red with anger.

'*Dis-moi*, you don't feel anything?' she said, kissing her hungrily. 'Are you tired? Shall I carry you upstairs and put you on the bed to rest?'

And she did carry her up, not allowing David to touch her. When they were at last safe in their own room, David came down to his study and threw himself into his chair in the dark with a groan.

CHAPTER VI

LOUIE and her child entered the sitting-room together when the bell rang for supper-tea. Louie had put on a high red silk dress of a brilliant, almost scarlet, tone, which showed her arms from the elbows and was very slightly clouded here and there with black; Cécile crept beside her, a little pale shadow, in a white muslin frock, adorned, however, as Lucy's vigilant eyes immediately perceived, with some very dainty and expensive embroidery. The mother's dress reminded her of that in which she first saw Louie Grieve; so did her splendid and reckless carriage; so did the wild play of her black eyes, always on the watch for opportunities of explosion and offence. How did they get their dresses? Who paid for them? And now they had come over to beg for more! Lucy could hardly keep a civil tongue in her head at all, as her sister-in-law swept round the room making strong and, to the mistress of the house, cutting remarks on the difference between 'Manchester dirt' and the brightness and cleanliness of Paris. Why, she lorded it over them as though the place belonged to her! 'And she is just a pauper—living on what we give her!' thought Lucy to herself with exasperation.

After supper, at which Louie behaved with the same indefinable insolence—whether as regarded the food or the china, or the shaky moderator lamp, a relic from David's earliest bachelor

days, which only he could coax into satisfactory burning—Lucy made the move, and said to her with cold constraint:

'Will you come into the drawing-room?—David has a pipe in the study after dinner.'

'I want to speak to David,' said Louie, pushing back her chair with noisy decision. 'I'll go with him. He can smoke as much as he likes—I'm used to it.'

'Well, then, come into my study,' said David, trying to speak cheerfully. 'Lucy will look after Cécile.'

To Louie's evident triumph Cécile made difficulties about going with her aunt, but was at last persuaded by the prospect of seeing Sandy in bed. She had already shown signs in her curious frightened way of a considerable interest in Sandy.

Then David led the way to the study. He put his sister into his armchair and stood pipe in hand beside her, looking down upon her. In his heart there was the passionate self-accusing sense that he could not feel pity, or affection, or remorse for the past when she was there; every look and word roused in him the old irritation, the old wish to master her, he had known so often in his youth. Yet he drew himself together, striving to do his best.

'Well, now, look here,' said Louie defiantly, 'I want some money.'

'So I supposed,' he said quietly, lighting his pipe.

Louie reddened.

'Well, and if I do want it,' she said, breathing quickly, 'I've a right to want it. You chose to waste all that money—all my money—on that marrying business, and you must take the consequence. I look upon it this way—you promised to put my money into your trade and give me a fair share of your profits. Then you chucked it away—you made me spend it all, and now, of course, I'm to have nothing to say to your profits. Oh dear, no! It's a trifle that I'm a pauper and you're rolling in money compared to me anyway. Oh! it doesn't matter nothing to nobody—not at all! All the same you couldn't have made the start you did—not those few months I was with you—without my money. Why can't you confess it, I want to know—and behave more handsome to me now—instead of leaving me in that state that I haven't a franc to bless myself with!'

She threw herself back in her chair, with one arm flung behind her head. David stared at her tongue-tied for a while by sheer amazement.

'I gave you everything I had,' he said, at last, with a slow distinctness, 'all your money, and all my own too. When I came back here, I had my new stock, it is true, but it was much of it unpaid for. My first struggle was to get my neck out of debt.'

He paused, shrinking with a kind of sick repulsion from the memory of that bygone year of shattered nerves and anguished effort. Deliberately he let thought and speech of it drop.

Louie was the last person in the world to whom he could talk of it.

'I built up my business again,' he resumed, 'by degrees. Mr. Doyle lent me money—it was on that capital I first began to thrive. From the very beginning, even in the very year when I handed over to you all our father's money—I sent you more. And every year since—you know as well as I do—'

But again he looked away and paused. Once more he felt himself on a wrong tack. What was the use of laying out, so to speak, all that he had done in the sight of these angry eyes? Besides, a certain high pride restrained him.

Louie looked a trifle disconcerted, and her flush deepened. Her audacious attempt to put him in the wrong and provide herself with a grievance could not be carried on. She took refuge in passion.

'Oh, I dare say you think you've done a precious lot!' she said, sitting straight up and locking her hands round her knee, while the whole frame of her stiffened and quivered. 'I suppose you think other people would think so too. I don't care! It don't matter to me. You're the only belonging I've got—who else was there for me to look to? Oh, it is all very fine! All I know is, I can't stand my life any more! If you can't do anything, I'll just pack up my traps and go. *Somebody*'ll have to make it easier for me, that's all! Last week—I was out of the house—he found out where I kept my money, he broke the lock open, and when I got home there was nothing. *Nothing*, I tell you!' Her voice rose to a shrillness that made David look to see that the door between them and Lucy was securely closed. 'And I'd promised a whole lot of things to the church for Easter, and Cécile and I haven't got a rag between us; and as for the rent, the landlord may whistle for it! Oh! the beast!' she said, between her teeth, while the fierce tears stood in her eyes.

Lucy—any woman of normal shrewdness, putting two and two together—would have allowed these complaints about half their claimed weight. Upon David—unconsciously inclined to measure all emotion by his own standard—they produced an immediate and deep impression.

'You poor thing!' he murmured, as he stood looking down upon her.

She tossed her head, as though resenting his compassion.

'Yes, I'm about tired of it! I thought I'd come over and tell you that. Now you know,—and if you hear things you don't like, don't blame me, that's all!'

Her great eyes blazed into his. He understood her. Her child—the priests—had, so far, restrained her. Now—what strange mixture of shameless impulse—curiosity, greed, reckless despair—had driven her here that she might threaten him thus!

'Ah, I dare say you think I've had a gay life of it over there with your money,' she went on, not allowing him to speak. '*My God!*'

She shrugged her shoulders, with a scornful laugh, while the tempest gathered within her.

'Don't I know perfectly that for years I have been one of the most beautiful women in Paris! Ask the men who have painted me for the Salon—ask that brute who might have made a fortune out of me if he hadn't been the sot he is! And what have I got by it? What do other women who are not a tenth part as good-looking as I am get by it? A comfortable life, anyway! *Eh bien! essayons!—nous aussi.*'

The look she flung at him choked the words on his lips.

'When I think of these ten years,' she cried, 'I just wonder at myself. There,—what you think about it I don't know, and I don't care. I might have had a good time, and I've had a *devil's* time. And, upon my word, I think I'll make a change!'

In her wild excitement she sprang up and began to pace the narrow room.

David watched her, fighting with himself, and with that inbred antipathy of temperament which seemed to paralyse both will and judgment. Was the secret of it that in their profound unlikeness they were yet so much alike?

Then he went up to her and made her sit down again.

'Let me have a word now,' he said quietly, though his hand as it gripped hers had a force of which he was unconscious. 'You say you wonder at yourself. Well, I can tell you this: other people have wondered too! When I left you in Paris ten years ago, I tell you frankly, I had no hopes. I said to myself—don't rage at me!—with that way of looking at things, and with such a husband, what chance is there? And for some years now, Louie, I confess to you, I have been simply humbled and amazed to see what—what—his voice sank and shook—'*love—and the fear of God*—can do. It has been hard to be miserable and poor—I know that—but you have cared for Cécile, and you have feared to shut yourself out from good people who spoke to you in God's name. Don't do yourself injustice. Believe in yourself. Look back upon these years and be thankful. With all their miseries they have been a kind of victory! Will you throw them away *now*? But your child is growing up and will understand. And there are hands to help—mine, always—always.'

He held out his to her, smiling. He could not have analysed his own impulse—this strange impulse which had led him to bless instead of cursing. But its effect upon Louie was startling. She had looked for, perhaps in her fighting mood she had ardently desired, an outburst of condemnation, against which her mad pleasure in the sound of her own woes and hatreds might once more spend itself. And instead of blaming and reproaching he had—

She stared at him. Then with a sudden giving way, which was a matter partly of nerves and partly of surprise, she let her two arms fall upon the edge of the chair, and dropping her head upon them, burst out into wild sobbing.

His own eyes were wet. He soothed her hurriedly and incoherently, told her he would spare her all the money he could; that he and Lucy would do their best, but that she must not suppose they were very rich. He did not regard all his money as his own.

He went on to explain to her something of his business position. Her sobbing slackened and ceased. And presently, his mood changing instinctively with hers, he became more vague and cautious in statement; his tone veered back towards that which he was accustomed to use to her. For, once her burst of passion over, he felt immediately that she was once more criticising everything that he said and did in her own interest.

'Oh, I know you've become a regular Communist,' she said sullenly at last, drying her eyes in haste. 'Well, I tell you, I must have a hundred pounds. I can't do with a penny less than that.'

He tried to get out of her for what precise purposes she wanted it, and whether her husband had stolen from her the whole of the quarter's allowance he had just sent her. She answered evasively; he felt that she was telling him falsehoods; and once more his heart grew dry within him.

'Well,' he said at last with a certain decision, 'I will do it if I can, and I think I can do it. But, Louie, understand that I have got Lucy and the child to think for, that I am not alone.'

'I should think *she* had got more than she could expect!' cried Louie, putting her hair straight with trembling hands.

His cheek flushed at the sneer, but before he could reply she said abruptly:

'Have you ever told her about Paris?'

'No,' he said, with equal abruptness, his mouth taking a stern line, 'and unless I am forced to do so I never shall. That you understand, I know, for I spoke to you about it in Paris. My past died for me when I asked Lucy to be my wife. I do not ask you to remember this. I take it for granted.'

'I saw that woman the other day,' said Louie with a strange smile, as she sat staring into the fire.

He started, but he did not reply. He went to straighten some papers on his table. It seemed to him that he did not want her to say a word more, and yet he listened for it.

'I remember they used to call her pretty,' said Louie, a hateful scorn shining in her still reddened eyes. 'She is just a little frump now—nobody would ever look at her twice. They say her husband leads her a life. He poisoned himself at an operation and has gone half crippled. She has to keep them both. She doesn't give herself the airs she used to, anyway.'

David could bear it no longer.

'I think you had better go and take Cécile to bed,' he said peremptorily. 'I heard it strike nine a few minutes ago. I will go and talk business to Lucy.'

She went with a careless air. As he saw her shut the door

his heart felt once more dead and heavy. A few minutes before there had been the flutter of a divine presence between them. Now he felt nothing but the iron grip of character and life. And that little picture which her last words had left upon the mind—it carried with it a shock and dreariness he could only escape by hard work, that best medicine of the soul. He went out early next morning to his printing-office, spent himself passionately upon a day of difficulties, and came back refreshed.

For the rest, he talked to Lucy, and with great difficulty persuaded her in the matter of the hundred pounds. Lucy's indignation may be taken for granted, and the angry proofs she heaped on David that Louie was an extravagant story-telling hussy, who spent everything she could get on dress and personal luxury.

'Why, her dressing-table is like a perfumer's shop!' she cried in her wrath; 'what she does with all the messes I can't imagine—makes herself beautiful, I suppose! Why should we pay for it all? And I tell you she has got a necklace of real pearls. I know they are real, for she told Lizzie' (Lizzie was the boy's nurse) 'that she always took them about with her to keep them safe out of her husband's clutches—just imagine her talking to the girl like that! When will you be able to give *me* real pearls, and where do you suppose she got them?'

David preferred not to inquire. What could he do, he asked himself in despair—what even could he know, unless Louie chose that he should know it? But she, on the contrary, carefully avoided the least recurrence to the threats of her first talk with him.

Ultimately, however, he brought his wife round, and Louie was informed that she could have her hundred pounds, which should be paid her on the day of her departure, but that nothing more, beyond her allowance, could or should be given her during the current year.

She took the promise very coolly, but certainly made herself more agreeable after it was given. She dressed up Cécile and set her dancing in the evenings, weird dances of a Spanish type, alternating between languor and a sort of 'possession,' which had been taught the child by a moustached violinist from Madrid, who admired her mother and paid Louie a fantastic and stormy homage through her child. She also condescended to take an interest in Lucy's wardrobe. The mingled temper and avidity with which Lucy received her advances may be imagined. It made her mad to have it constantly implied that her gowns and bonnets would not be worn by a maid-of-all-work in Paris. At the same time, when Louie's fingers had been busy with them it was as plain to her as to anyone else that they became her twice as well as they had before. So she submitted to be pinned and pulled about and tried on, keeping as much as possible on her dignity all the time, and reddening with fresh wrath each time

that Louie made it plain to her that she thought her sister-in-law a provincial little fool, and was only troubling herself about her to pass the time.

Dora, of course, came up to see Louie, and Louie was much more communicative to her than to either Lucy or David. She told stories of her husband which made Dora's hair stand on end; but she boasted in great detail of her friendships with certain Legitimist ladies of the bluest blood, with one of whom she had just held a *quête* for some Catholic object on the stairs of the Salon. 'I was in blue and pink with a little silver,' she said, looking quickly behind her to see that Lucy was not listening. 'And Cécile was a fairy, with spangled wings—the sweetest thing you ever saw. We were both in the illustrated papers the week after, but as nobody took any notice of Madame de C—— she has behaved like a washerwoman to me ever since. As if I could help her complexion or her age!'

But above all did she boast herself against Dora in Church matters. She would go to St. Damian's on Sunday, triumphantly announcing that she should have to confess it as a sin when she got home, and afterwards, when Dora, as her custom was, came out to early dinner with the Grieves, Louie could not contain herself on the subject of the dresses, the processions, the decorations, the flowers, and ceremonial trappings in general, with which *she* might, if she liked, regale herself either at Ste. Eulalie or the Madeleine, in comparison with the wretched show offered by St. Damian's. Dora, after an early service and much Sunday-school, sat looking pale and weary under the scornful information poured out upon her. She was outraged by Louie's tone; yet she was stung by her contempt. Once her gentleness was roused to speech, and she endeavoured to give some of the reasons for rejecting the usurped authority of the 'Bishop of Rome,' in which she had been drilled at different times. But she floundered and came to grief. Her adversary laughed at her, and in the intervals of rating Cécile for having inked her dress, flaunted some shrill controversy which left them all staring. Louie vindicating the claims of the Holy See with much unction and an appropriate diction! It seemed to David, as he listened, that the irony of life could hardly be carried further.

On the following day, David, not without a certain consciousness; said to John Dalby, his faithful helper through many years, and of late his partner:

'My sister is up at our place, John, with her little girl. Lucy would be very glad if you would go in this evening to see them.'

John, who was already aware of the advent of Madame Montjoie, accepted the invitation and went. Louie received him with a manner half mocking—half patronising—and made no effort whatever to be agreeable to him. She was preoccupied; and the stout, shy man in his new suit only bored her. As for him, he sat and watched her; his small, amazed eyes took in her ways with Cécile, alternately boastful and tyrannical; her airs

towards Lucy; her complete indifference to her brother's life and interests. When he got up to go, he took leave of her with all the old timid *gaucherie*. But if, when he entered the room, there had been anything left in his mind of the old dream, he was a wholly free man when he recrossed the threshold. He walked home thinking much of a small solicitor's daughter, who worshipped at the Congregational chapel he himself attended. He had been at David Grieve's side all these years; he loved him probably more than he would now love any woman; he devoted himself with ardour to the printing and selling of the various heretical works and newspapers published by Grieve & Co.; and yet for some long time past he had been—and was likely to remain—a man of strong religious convictions, of a common Evangelical type.

The second week of Louie's stay was a much greater trial than the first to all concerned. She grew tired of dressing and patronising Lucy; her sharp eyes and tongue found out all her sister-in-law's weak points; the two children were a fruitful source of jarring and jealousy between the mothers; and by the end of the week their relation was so much strained, and David had so much difficulty in keeping the peace, that he could only pine for the Monday morning which was to see Louie's departure. Meanwhile nothing occurred to give him back his momentary hold upon her. She took great care not to be alone with him. It was as though she felt the presence of a new force in him, and would give it no chance of affecting her in mysterious and incalculable ways.

On the Saturday before her last Sunday, Reuben Grieve arrived in Manchester—with his wife. His nephew's letter and invitation had thrown the old man into a great flutter. Ultimately his curiosity as to David's home and child—David himself he had seen several times since the marriage—and the desire, which the more prosperous state of his own circumstances allowed him to feel, to see what Louie might be like after all these years—decided him to go. And when he told Hannah of his intended journey, he found, to his amazement, that she was minded to go too. 'If yo'll tell me when yo gan me a jaunt last, I'll be obliged to yo!' she said sourly, and he at once felt himself a selfish brute that he should have thought of taking the little pleasure without her.

When they were seated in the railway-carriage, he broke out in a sudden excitement:

'Wal, I never thowt, Hannah, to see yo do thissens naw moor!'

'Aye, yo wor allus yan to mak t' warst o' things,' she said to him, as she slowly settled herself in her corner.

Nevertheless, Reuben's feeling was amply justified. It had been a resurrection. The clever young doctor, brimful of new methods, who had brought her round, had arrived just in time to stop the process of physical deterioration before it had gone too far; and the recovery of power both on the paralysed side

and in general health had been marvellous. She walked with a stick, and was an old and blanched woman before her time. But her indomitable spirit was once more provided with its necessary means of expression. She was at least as rude as ever, and it was as clear as anything can be in the case of a woman who has never learnt to smile, that her visit to Manchester—the first for ten years—was an excitement and satisfaction to her.

David met them at the station; but Reuben persisted in going to an old-fashioned eating-house in the centre of the city, where he had been accustomed to stay on the occasion of his rare visits to Manchester, in spite of his nephew's repeated offers of hospitality.

'Noa, Davy, noa,' he said, 'yo're a gen'leman now, and yo conno' be moidered wi' oos. We'st coom and see yo—thank yo kindly,—bit we'st do for oursels i' th' sleepin' way.'

To which Hannah gave a grim and energetic assent.

When Louie had been told of their expected arrival she opened her black eyes to their very widest extent.

'Well, you'd better keep Aunt Hannah and me out of each other's way,' she remarked briefly. 'I shall let her have it, you'll see. I'm bound to.' A remark that David did his best to forget, seeing that the encounter was now past averting.

When on Sunday afternoon the door of the Grieves's sitting-room opened to admit Hannah and Reuben Grieve, Louie was lying half asleep in an armchair by the fire, Cécile and Sandy were playing with bricks in the middle of the floor, and Dora and Lucy were chatting on the sofa.

Lucy, who had seen Reuben before, but had never set eyes on Hannah, sprang up ill at ease and awkward, but genuinely anxious to behave nicely to her husband's relations.

'Won't you take a chair? I'll go and call David. He's in the next room. This is Miss Lomax. Louie!'

Startled by the somewhat sharp call, Louie sat up and rubbed her eyes.

Hannah, resting on her stick, was standing in the middle of the floor. At sight of the familiar tyrannous face, grown parchment-white in place of its old grey hue—of the tall gaunt figure robed in the Sunday garb of rusty black which Louie perfectly remembered, and surmounted by the old head-gear—the stiff frizzled curls held in place by two small combs on the temples, the black bandeau across the front of the head, and the towering bonnet—Louie suddenly flushed and rose.

'How do you do?' she said in a cool off-hand way, holding out her hand, which Hannah's black cotton glove barely touched. 'Well, Uncle Reuben, do you think I'm grown? I have had about time to, anyway, since you saw me. That's my little girl.'

With a patronising smile she pushed forward Cécile. The short-sighted tremulous Reuben, staring uncomfortably about him at the town splendours in which 'Davy' lived, had to have

the child's hand put into his by Dora before he could pull himself together enough to respond.

'I'm glad to see tha, my little dear,' he said, awkwardly dropping his hat and umbrella, as he stooped to salute her. 'I'm sure yo're varra kind, miss'—this was said apologetically to Dora, who had picked up his belongings and put them on a chair. 'Wal, Louie, she doan't feature her mither mich, as I can see.'

He looked hurriedly at his wife for confirmation. Hannah, who had seated herself on the highest and plainest chair she could find, stared the child up and down, and then slowly removed her eyes, saying nothing. Instantly her manner woke the old rage in Louie, who was observing her excitedly.

'Come here to me, Cécile. I'd be sorry, anyway, if you were like what your mother was at your age. You'd be a poor, ill-treated, half-starved little wretch if you were!'

Hannah started, but not unpleasantly. Her grim mouth curved with a sort of satisfaction. It was many years since she had enjoyed those opportunities for battle which Louie's tempers had once so freely afforded her.

'She's nobbut a midge,' she remarked audibly to Dora, who had just tried to propitiate her by a footstool. 'The chilt looks as thoo she'd been fed on spiders or frogs, or summat o' that soart.'

At this moment David came in, just in time to prevent another explosion from Louie. He was genuinely glad to see his guests; his feeling of kinship was much stronger now than it ever had been in his youth; and in these years of independent, and on the whole happy, living he had had time to forget even Hannah's enormities.

'Well, have you got a comfortable inn?' he asked Reuben presently, when some preliminaries were over.

'I thank yo kindly, Davy,' said Reuben cautiously, 'we're meeterly weel sarved; bit yo conno look for mich fro teawn folk.'

'What are yo allus so mealy-mouthed for?' said his wife indignantly. 'Why conno yo say reet out 'at it's a pleeace not fit for any decent dog to put his head in, an' an ill-mannert daggletail of a woman to keep it, as I'd like to sweep out wi th' bits of a morning, an' leave her on th' muck-heap wheer she belongs?'

David laughed. To an ear long accustomed to the monotony of town civilities there was a not unwelcome savour of the moors even in these brutalities of Hannah's.

'Sandy, where are you?' he said, looking round. 'Have you had a look at him, Aunt Hannah?'

Sandy, who was sitting in the midst of his bricks sucking his thumb patiently till Cécile should be given back to him by her mother, and these invaders should be somehow dispersed, looked up and gave his father a sleepy and significant nod, as much as to say, 'Leave me alone, and turn these people out.'

But David lifted him up, and carried him off for exhibition.

Hannah looked at him, as he lay lazily back on his father's arm, his fair curls straying over David's coat, his cheek flushed by the heat. 'Aye, he's a gradely little chap,' she said, more graciously it seemed to David than he ever remembered to have heard Hannah Grieve speak before. His paternal vanity was instantly delighted.

'Sit up, Sandy, and tell your great-uncle and aunt about the fine games you've been having with your cousin.'

But Sandy was lost in quite other reflections. He looked out upon Hannah and Reuben with grave filmy eyes, as though from a vast distance, and said absently:

'Daddy!'

'Yes, Sandy, speak up.'

'Daddy, when everybody in the world was babies, who put 'em to bed?'

The child spoke as usual with a slow flute-like articulation, so that every word could be heard. Reuben and Hannah turned and looked at each other.

'Lord alive!' cried Hannah 'whativer put sich notions into th' chilt's yed?'

David, with a happy twinkle in his eye, held up a hand for silence.

'I don't know, Sandy; give it up.'

Sandy considered a second or two, then said, with the sigh of one who relinquishes speculation in favor of the conventional solution:

'I s'pose God did.'

His tone was dejected, as though he would gladly have come to another conclusion if he could.

'Reuben,' said Hannah with severity, 'hand me that sugar-stick.'

Reuben groped in his pockets for the barley-sugar, which, in spite of Hannah's scoffs, he had bought in Market Street the evening before, 'for t' childer.' He watched his wife in gaping astonishment as he saw her approaching Sandy, with blandishments which, rough and clumsy as they were, had nevertheless the effect of beguiling that young man on to the lap where barley-sugar was to be had. Hannah fed him triumphantly, making loud remarks on his beauty and cleverness.

Meanwhile Louie stood on the other side of the fire, holding Cécile close against her, with a tight defiant grip—her lip twitching contemptuously. David, always sensitively alive to her presence and her moods, insisted in the midst of Sandy's feast that Cécile should have her share. Sandy held out the barley-sugar, following it with wistful eyes. Louie beat down Cécile's grasping hand. 'You shan't spoil your tea—you'll be sick with that stuff!' she said imperiously. Hannah turned, and brought a slow venomous scrutiny to bear upon her niece—on the slim tall figure in the elegant Parisian dress, the daintily curled and frizzled head, the wild angry eyes. Then she with-

drew her glance, contented. Louie's evident jealousy appeased her. She had come to Manchester with one fixed determination—not to be 'talked foine to by that hizzy.'

At this juncture tea made its appearance, Lucy having some time ago given up the sit-down tea in the dining-room, which was the natural custom of her class, as not genteel. She seated herself nervously to pour it out. Hannah had at the very beginning put her down 'as a middlin' soart o' person,' and vouchsafed her very little notice.

'Auntie Dora! auntie Dora!' cried Sandy, escaping from Hannah's knee, 'I'm coming to sit by zoo.'

And as soon as he had got comfortably into her pocket, he pulled her head down and whispered to her, his thoughts running as before in the theological groove, 'Auntie Dora, God made me—and God made Cécile—*did* God make that one?'

And he nodded across at Hannah, huddling himself together meanwhile in a paroxysm of glee and mischief. He was excited by the flatteries he had been receiving, and Dora, thankful to see that Hannah had heard nothing, could only quiet him by copious supplies of bread and butter.

David wooed Cécile to sit on a stool beside him, and things went smoothly for a time, though Hannah made it clearly evident that this was not the kind of tea she had expected, and that she 'didn't howd wi' new-fangled ways o' takkin' your vittles.' Reuben did his best to cover and neutralise her remarks by gossip to David about the farm and the valley. 'Eh—it's been nobbut *raggy* weather up o' the moors this winter, Davy, an' a great lot o' sheep lost. Nobbut twothrey o' mine, I thank th' Lord.' But in the midst of a most unflattering account of the later morals and development of the Wigson family, Reuben stopped dead short, with a stare at the door.

'Wal, aa niver!—theer's Mr. Ancrum hissel,—I do uphowd yo!'

And the old man rose with effusion, his queer eyes and face beaming and blinking with a light of affectionate memory, for Ancrum stood in the doorway, smiling a mute inquiry at Lucy as to whether he might come in. David sprang up to bring him into the circle. Hannah held out an ungracious hand. Never, all these years, had she forgiven the ex-minister those representations he had once made on the subject of David's 'prenticing.

Then the new-comer sat down by Reuben cheerily, parrying the farmer's concern about his altered looks, and watching Louie, who had thrown him a careless word in answer to his greeting. Dora, who had come to know him well, and to feel much of the affectionate reverence for him that David did, in spite of some bewilderment as to his religious position, went round presently to talk to him, and Sandy as it happened was left on his stool for a minute or two forgotten. He asked his mother plaintively for cake, and she did not hear him. Meanwhile Cécile had cake, and he followed her eating of it with resentful eyes.

'Come here, Cécile,' said David, 'and hold the cake while I cut it; there's a useful child.'

He handed a piece to Reuben, and then put the next into Cécile's hand.

'Ready for some more, little woman?'

Cécile in a furtive squirrel-like way seized the piece and was retiring with it, when Sandy, beside himself, jumped from his stool, rushed at his cousin and beat her wildly with his small fists.

'You're a geedy thing—a geedy 'gustin' thing!' he cried, sobbing partly because he wanted the cake, still more because, after his exaltation on Hannah's knee, he had been so unaccountably neglected. To see Cécile batten on a second piece while he was denied a first was more than could be borne.

'You little viper, you!' exclaimed Louie, and springing up, she swept across to Sandy, and boxed his ears smartly, just as she was accustomed to box Cécile's, whenever the fancy took her.

The child raised a piercing cry, and David caught him up.

'Give him to me, David, give him to me,' cried Lucy, who had almost upset the tea-table in her rush to her child. 'I'll see whether that sister of yours shall beat and abuse my boy in my own house! Oh, she may beat her own child as much as she pleases, she does it all day long! If she were a poor person she would be had up.'

Her face glowed with passion. The exasperation of many days spoke in her outburst. David, himself trembling with anger, in vain tried to quiet her and Sandy.

'Ay, I reckon she maks it hot wark for them 'at ha to live wi her,' said Hannah audibly, looking round on the scene with a certain enjoyment which contrasted with the panic and distress of the rest.

Louie, who was holding Cécile—also in tears—in her arms, swept her fierce, contemptuous gaze from Lucy to her ancient enemy.

'You must be putting in *your* word, must you?—you old toad, you—you that robbed us of our money till your own husband was ashamed of you!'

And, totally regardless of the presence of Dora and Ancrum, and of the efforts made to silence her by Dora or by the flushed and unhappy Reuben, she descended on her foe. She flung charge after charge in Hannah's face, showing the minutest and most vindictive memory for all the sordid miseries of her childhood; and then when her passion had spent itself on her aunt, she returned to Lucy, exulting in the sobs and the excitement she had produced. In vain did David try either to silence her or to take Lucy away. Nothing but violence could have stopped the sister's tongue; his wife, under a sort of fascination of terror and rage, would not move. Flinging all thoughts of her dependence on David—of the money she had come to ask—of her leave-taking on the morrow—to the winds, Louie revenged

herself amply for her week's unnatural self-control, and gave full rein to a mad propensity which had been gradually roused and spurred to ungovernable force by the trivial incidents of the afternoon. She made mock of Lucy's personal vanity; she sneered at her attempts to ape her betters, shrilly declaring that no one would ever take her for anything else than what she was, the daughter of a vulgar cheese-paring old hypocrite; and, finally, she attacked Sandy as a nasty, greedy, abominable little monkey, not fit to associate with her child, and badly in want of the stick.

Then slowly she retreated to the door out of breath, the wild lightnings of her eyes flashing on them still. David was holding the hysterical Lucy, while Dora was trying to quiet Sandy. Otherwise a profound silence had fallen on them all, a silence which seemed but to kindle Louie's fury the more.

'Ah, you think you've got him in your power, him and his money, you little white-livered cat!' she cried, standing in the doorway, and fixing Lucy with a look beneath which her sister-in-law quailed, and hid her face on David's arm. 'You think you'll stop him giving it to them that have a right to look to him? Perhaps you'd better look out; perhaps there are people who know more about him than you. Do you think he would ever have looked at you, you little powsement, if he hadn't been taken on the rebound?'

She gave a mad laugh as she flung out the old Derbyshire word of abuse, and stood defying them, David and all. David strode forward and shut the door upon her. Then he went tenderly up to his wife, and took her and Sandy into the library.

The sound of Cécile's wails could be heard in the distance. The frightened Reuben turned and looked at his wife. She had grown paler even than before, but her eyes were all alive.

'A racklesome, natterin' creetur as ivir I seed,' she said calmly; 'I allus telt tha, Reuben Grieve, what hoo'd coom to. It's bred in her—that's yan thing to be hodden i' mind. But I'll shift her in double quick-sticks if she ever cooms meddlin' i' *my* house, Reuben Grieve—soa yo know.'

'She oughtn't to stay here,' said Ancrum in a quick undertone to Dora; 'she might do that mother and child a mischief.'

Dora sat absorbed in her pity for David, in her passionate sympathy for this home that was as her own.

'She is going to-morrow, thank God!' she said with a long breath; 'oh, what an awful woman!'

Ancrum looked at her with a little sad smile.

'Whom are you sorry for?' he asked. 'Those two in there?' and he nodded towards the library. 'Think again, Miss Dora. There is one face that will haunt me whenever I think of this—the face of that French child.'

All the afternoon visitors dispersed. The hours passed. Lucy, worn out, had gone to bed with a crying which seemed to have

in it some new and heavy element she would not speak of, even to David. The evening meal came, and there was no sign or sound from that room upstairs where Louie had locked herself in.

David stood by the fire in the dining-room, his lips sternly set. He had despatched a servant to Louie's door with an offer to send up food for her and Cécile. But the girl had got no answer. Was he bound to go—bound to bring about the possible renewal of a degrading scene?

At this moment Lizzie, the little nurse, tapped at the door.

'If you please, sir—'

'Yes. Anything wrong with Master Sandy?'

David went to the door in a tremor. 'He won't go to sleep, sir. He wants you, and I'm afraid he'll disturb mistress again.'

David ran upstairs.

'Sandy, what do you want?'

Sandy was crying violently, far down under the bedclothes. When David drew him out, he was found to be grasping a piece of crumbling cake, sticky with tears.

'It's Cécile's cake,' he sobbed into his father's ear. 'I want to give it her.'

And in fact, after his onslaught upon her, Cécile had dropped the offending cake, which he had instantly picked up the moment before Louie struck him. He had held it tight gripped ever since, and repentance was busy in his small heart.

David thought a moment.

'Come with me, Sandy,' he said at last, and, wrapping up the child in an old shawl that hung near, he carried him off to Louie's door. 'Louie!' he called, after his knock, in a low voice, for he was uncomfortably aware that his household was on the watch for developments.

For a while there was no answer. Sandy, absorbed in the interest of the situation, clung close to his father and stopped crying.

At last Louie suddenly flung the door wide open.

'What do you want?' she said defiantly, with the gesture and bearing of a tragic actress. She was, however, deadly white, and David, looking past her, saw that Cécile was lying wide awake in her little bed.

'Sandy wants to give Cécile her cake,' he said quietly, 'and to tell her that he is sorry for striking her.'

He carried his boy up to Cécile. A smile flashed over the child's worn face. She held out her little arms. David, infinitely touched, laid down Sandy, and the children crooned together on the same pillow, he trying to stuff the cake into Cécile's mouth, she gently refusing.

'She's ill,' said Louie abruptly, 'she's feverish—I want a doctor.'

'We can get one directly,' he said. 'Will you come down and have some food? Lucy has gone to bed. If Lizzie comes

and sits by the children, perhaps they will go to sleep. I can carry Sandy back later.'

Louie paused irresolutely. Then she went up to the bed, knelt down by it, and took Cécile in her arms.

'You can take him away,' she said, pointing to Sandy. 'I will put her to sleep. Don't you send me anything to eat. I want a doctor. And if you won't order a fly for me at twenty minutes to nine to-morrow, I will go out myself, that's all.'

'Louie!' he cried, holding out his hand to her in despair, 'why will you treat us in this way—what have we done to you?'

'Never you mind,' she said sullenly, gathering the child to her and confronting him with steady eyes. There was a certain magnificence in their wide unconscious despair—in this one fierce passion.

She and Lucy did not meet again. In the morning David paid her her hundred pounds, and took her and Cécile to the station, a doctor having seen the child the night before, and prescribed medicine, which had given her a quiet night. Louie barely thanked him for the money. She was almost silent and still very pale.

Just before they parted, the thought of the tyranny of such a nature, of the life to which she was going back, wrung the brother's heart. The outrage of the day before dropped from his mind as of no account, effaced by sterner realities.

'Write to me, Louie!' he said to her just as the train was moving off; 'I could always come if there was trouble—or Dora.'

She did not answer, and her hand dropped from his. But he remembered afterwards that her eyes were fixed upon him, as long as the train was in sight, and the picture of her dark possessed look will be with him to the end.

CHAPTER VII

It was a warm April Sunday. Lucy and Dora were pacing up and down in the garden, and Lucy was talking in a quick, low voice.

'Oh! there was something, Dora. You know as well as I do there was something. That awful woman didn't say that for nothing. I suppose he'd tell me if I asked him.'

'Then why don't you ask him?' said Dora, with a little frown.

Lucy gathered a sprig of budding lilac, and restlessly stripped off its young green.

'It isn't very pleasant,' she said at last, slowly. 'I dare say it's silly to expect your husband never to have looked at anybody else—'

She paused again, unable to explain herself. Dora glanced at her, and was somewhat struck by her thin and worn appearance. She had often, moreover, seemed to her cousin to be fretting during these last weeks. Not that there was much difference in her ways with David and Sandy. But her small vanities, prejudices,