A shiver passed through Rupert's frame. "*He* killed him, do you mean?—my uncle, Rupert Trevlyn?"

"No, it wasn't he that killed him—as was proved a long while afterwards. But you see at the time it wasn't known exactly who had done it: they were all in league together, as may be said; all in the mess. Any way, the young heir, whether in fear or shame, perhaps both, went off in secret, and before many months had gone over, the bells here were tolling for him. He had died far away."

"But people never could have believed that he, a Trevlyn, killed a man?" said Rupert, indignantly.

Old Canham paused. "You have heard of the Trevlyn temper, Master Rupert?"

"Who hasn't?" returned Rupert. "They say I have a touch of it."

"Well, those that believed it laid it to that temper, you see. They thought the heir had been overtook by a fit of passion that wasn't to be governed, and might have done the mischief in it. In those fits of passion a man is mad."

"Is he," abstractedly remarked Rupert, falling into a reverie. He had never before heard this episode in the history of the uncle whose name he bore—Rupert Trevlyn.

CHAPTER XIV.

NO BREAKFAST FOR RUPERT.

Old Canham stood at the door of his lodge, his bald head stretched out. He was gazing after one who was winding through the avenue, in the direction of Trevlyn Hold, one whom it was old Canham's delight to patronize and make much of in his humble way; whom he encouraged in all sorts of vain and delusive notions—Rupert Trevlyn. Could Mr. Chattaway have divined that bitter treason was talked against himself nearly every time Rupert dropped into the lodge, he might have tried hard to turn old Canham out of it. Harmless treason, however; consisting of rebellious words only. There was neither plotting nor hatching; old Canham and Rupert never glanced at that; both were perfectly aware that Chattaway held his place by a sure tenure, which could not be disturbed.

Many years ago, before Squire Trevlyn died, Mark Canham had grown ill in his service. In his service he had caught the violent cold which ended in an incurable rheumatic affection. The Squire settled him in the lodge, then just vacant, and allowed him five shillings a week. When the Squire died, Chattaway would have undone this. He wished to turn the old man out again (but it must be observed in a parenthesis that, though universally styled old Canham, the man was not so old in years as in appearance), and to place some one else in the lodge. I think, when there is no love lost between people, as the saying runs, each side is conscious of it. Chattaway disliked Mark Canham, and he had a shrewd suspicion that Mark returned the feeling with interest. But he found that he could not dismiss him from the lodge, for Miss Trevlyn put her veto upon it. She openly declared that Squire Trevlyn's act in placing his old servant there should be reverenced; she promised Mark that he should not be turned out of it as long as he lived. Chattaway had no resource but to bow to it; he might not cross Diana Trevlyn; but he did succeed in reducing the weekly allowance by just half. Half-a-crown per week was all the regular money enjoyed by the lodge since the time of Squire Trevlyn. Miss Diana sometimes gave a trifle from her private purse; and the gardener was allowed to make an occasional present of vegetables that were in danger of spoiling: at the beginning of winter, too, a load of wood would be stacked in the shed behind the lodge, through the forethought of Miss Diana. But it was not much altogether to keep two people upon; and Ann Canham was glad to accept a day's hard work offered her at any of the neighbouring houses, or to do a little plain sewing at home. Very fine sewing she could not do, for she suffered from her eyes, which were generally more or less inflamed.

Old Canham watched Rupert until the turnings of the avenue hid him from view, and then drew back into the room. Ann was busy with the breakfast. A loaf of oaten bread was on the bare table, and a basin of skim milk, which she had just made hot, was placed before her father. A smaller cup of it served for her own share: and that constituted their breakfast. Three mornings a week Ann Canham had the privilege of fetching a quart of skim milk from the dairy at the Hold. Chattaway growled at the extravagance of the gift, but he did no more, for it was Miss Diana's pleasure that it should be supplied.

"Chattaway 'll go a bit too far, if he don't mind," observed old Canham to his daughter, in relation to Rupert. "He must be of a bad nature, to lock him out of his own house. For the matter of that, however, he is of a bad one; and it's knowed he is."

"It is not his own, father," Ann Canham ventured to retort. "Poor Master Rupert haven't got no right to it now."

"It's a shame but what he had. Why, Chattaway has no more moral right to that there fine estate than I have!" added the old man, holding up his left arm in the heat of argument. "If Master Rupert and Miss Maude were dead,—if Joe Trevlyn had never left a child at all,—there's others would have a right to it before Chattaway."

"But Chattaway has it, father, and nobody can't alter it, or hinder his having it," sensibly returned Ann. "You'll have your milk cold."

The breakfast hour at Trevlyn Hold was early, and when Rupert entered, he found most of the family downstairs. Rupert ran upstairs to his bedroom, where he washed and refreshed himself as much as was possible after his hard night. He was one upon whom only a night's want of bed would tell seriously. When he descended to the breakfast-room, they were all assembled except Cris and Mrs. Chattaway. Cris was given to lying in bed in a morning, and the self-indulgence was permitted. Mrs. Chattaway also was apt to be late, coming down generally when breakfast was nearly over.

Rupert took his place at the breakfast-table. Mr. Chattaway, who was at that moment raising his coffee-cup to his lips, put it down and stared at him. As he might have stared at some stranger who had intruded and sat down amongst them.

"What do you want?" asked Mr. Chattaway.

"Want?" repeated Rupert, not understanding. "Only my breakfast."

"Which you will not get here," calmly and coldly returned Mr. Chattaway. "If you cannot come home to sleep at night, you shall not have your breakfast here in the morning."

"I did come home," said Rupert; "but I was not let in."

"Of course you were not. The household had retired."

"Cris came home after I did, and was allowed to enter," objected Rupert again.

"That is no business of yours," said Mr. Chattaway. "All you have to do is to obey the rules I lay down. And I will have them obeyed," he added, more sternly.

Rupert sat on, unoccupied. Octave, who was presiding at the table, did not give him any coffee; no one attempted to hand him anything to eat. Maude was seated opposite to him: he could see that the unpleasantness was agitating her painfully; that her colour went and came; that she toyed with her breakfast, but could not swallow it: least of all, dared *she* interfere to give even so much as a little dry bread to her ill-fated brother.

"Where did you sleep last night, pray?" inquired Mr. Chattaway, pausing in the midst of helping himself to some pigeon-pie, as he looked at Rupert.

"Not in this house," curtly replied Rupert. The unkindness seemed to be changing his very nature. It had continued long and long; it had been shown in many and various forms.

The master of Trevlyn Hold finished helping himself to the pie, and began eating it with apparent relish. He was about half-way through the plateful when he again stopped to address Rupert, who was sitting in silence, nothing but the table-cloth before him.

"You need not wait. If you stop there until mid-day you'll get no breakfast. Gentlemen who sleep outside do not break their fasts in my house."

Rupert pushed back his chair, and rose. Happening to glance across at Maude, he saw that her tears were dropping silently. Oh, it was an unhappy home for both! Rupert crossed the hall to the door: he thought he might as well depart at once for Blackstone. Fine as the morning was, the air, as he passed out, struck coldly upon him, and he turned back for an overcoat. Sitting up does not give any one an additional warmth.

It was in his bedroom. As he came down with it on his arm, Mrs. Chattaway was crossing the corridor. She drew him inside her sitting-room.

"I could not sleep," she murmured. "I was awake nearly all night, grieving and thinking of you. Just before daylight I dropped into a sleep, and then dreamt that you were running up to the door from the waves of the sea, which were rushing onwards to overtake you. I thought you were knocking at the door, and we could not get down to it in time, and the waters came on and on. Rupert, darling, all this is telling upon me. Why did you not come in?"

"I meant to be in, Aunt Edith; indeed I did; but I was playing at chess with George Ryle, and did not notice the

time. It was only just turned half-past when I got here; Mr. Chattaway might have let me in without any great stretch of indulgence," he added, his tone one of bitterness. "So might Cris."

"What did you do?" she asked.

"I got in at old Canham's, and lay on their settle. Don't repeat this, or it may get the Canhams into trouble."

"Have you had breakfast yet?"

"I am not to have any."

The words startled her. "Rupert!"

"Mr. Chattaway ordered me from the table. The next thing, I expect, he will be ordering me from the house. If I knew where to go I wouldn't stop in it another day. I would not, Aunt Edith."

"Have you had nothing—nothing?"

"Nothing. I would go round to the dairy and get some milk, but that I expect I should be told of. I'm off to Blackstone now. Good-bye."

The tears were filling her eyes as she lifted them in their sad yearning. He stooped and kissed her.

"Don't grieve, Aunt Edith. You can't make it better for me. I have got the cramp like anything," he carelessly observed as he went off. "It is through lying in the cold on that hard settle."

"Rupert! Rupert!"

He turned back, half in alarm. The tone was one of wild, painful entreaty.

"You will come home to-night, Rupert?"

"Yes. Depend upon me."

She remained a few minutes longer, to watch him down the avenue. He had put on his coat, and went along with slow and hesitating steps; very different from the firm, careless steps of a strong frame, springing from a happy heart. Mrs. Chattaway pressed her hands upon her brow, lost in a painful vision. If his father, her once dearly-loved brother Joe, could be looking on at the injustice done on earth, what would he think of the portion meted out to Rupert?

She descended to the breakfast-room. Mr. Chattaway had finished his breakfast and was rising. She kissed her children one by one; she sat down patiently and silently, smiling without cheerfulness. Octave passed her a cup of coffee, which was cold; and then asked her what she would take to eat. But she said she was not hungry that morning, and would eat nothing.

"Rupert's gone away without his breakfast, mamma," cried Emily. "Papa would not let him have it. Serve him right! He stayed out all night."

Mrs. Chattaway stole a glance at Maude. She was sitting pale and quiet; her air that of one who has to bear some long, wearing pain.

"If you have finished your breakfast, Maude, you can be getting ready to take the children for their walk," said Octave, speaking with her usual assumption of authority—an assumption which Maude at least might not dispute.

Mr. Chattaway left the room, and ordered his horse to be got ready. He was going to ride over his land for an hour before proceeding to Blackstone. Whilst the animal was being saddled, he rejoiced his eyes with his rich stores; the corn heaped in his barns, the fine hay-ricks in his rick-yard. All very satisfactory, very consoling to the covetous master of Trevlyn Hold.

He went out, riding hither and thither. Half-an-hour afterwards, when in the lane which skirted Mrs. Ryle's lands on the one side and his on the other, he saw another horseman before him. It was George Ryle. Mr. Chattaway touched his horse with the spur, and rode up to him at a hand gallop. George turned his head, saw it was Mr. Chattaway, and continued his way. That gentleman had been better pleased had George stopped.

"Are you hastening on to avoid me, Mr. Ryle?" he called out, in his sullen temper. "You might have seen that I wished to speak to you, by the pace at which I urged my horse."

George reined in, and turned to face Mr. Chattaway. "I saw nothing of the sort," he answered "Had I known that you wanted me, I should have stopped; but it is no unusual circumstance for me to see you riding fast about your land."

"Well, what I have to say is this: that I'd recommend you not to get Rupert Trevlyn to your house at night, and to keep him there to unreasonable hours."

George paused. "I don't understand you, Mr. Chattaway."

"Don't you?" retorted that gentleman. "I'm not talking Dutch. Rupert Trevlyn has taken to frequent your house of late; it's not altogether good for him."

"Do you fear that he will get any harm in it?" quietly asked George.

"I think it would be better for him that he should stay away.

Is the Hold not sufficient for him to spend his evenings in, but he must seek amusement elsewhere? I shall be obliged to you not to encourage his visits."

"Mr. Chattaway," said George, his face full of earnestness, as he turned it to that gentleman's, "it appears to me that you are labouring under some mistake, or you would certainly not speak to me as you are now doing. I do not encourage Rupert to my mother's house, in one sense of the word; I never press for his visits. When he does come, I show myself happy to see him and make him welcome—as I should do by any other visitor. Common courtesy demands this of me."

"You do press for his visits," said Mr. Chattaway.

"I do not," firmly repeated George. "Shall I tell you why I do not? I have no wish but to be open in the matter. An impression has seated itself in my mind that his visits to our house displease you, and therefore I have not encouraged them."

Perhaps Mr. Chattaway was rather taken back at this answer. At any rate, he made no reply to it.

"But to receive him courteously when he does come, I cannot help doing," continued George. "I shall do it still, Mr. Chattaway. If Trevlyn Farm is to be a forbidden house to Rupert, it is not from our side that the interdict shall come. So long as Rupert pays us these visits of friendship—and what harm you can think they do him, or why he should not pay them, I am unable to conceive—so long he will be met with a welcome."

"Do you say this to oppose me?"

"Far from it. If you will look at the case in an unprejudiced light, you may perhaps see that I speak in accordance with the commonest usages of civility. To close the doors of our house on Rupert when there exists no reason why they should be closed—and most certainly he has given us none—would be a breach of good feeling and good manners that we might blush to be guilty of."

"You have been opposing me all the later years of your life, George Ryle. From that past time when I wished to place you with Wall and Barnes, you have done nothing but act in opposition to me."

"I have forgiven that," said George, pointedly, a glow rising to his face at the recollection. "As to any other opposition, I am unconscious of it. You have given me advice occasionally respecting the farm; but the advice has not in general tallied

with my own opinion, and therefore I have not taken it. If you call that opposing you, Mr. Chattaway, I cannot help it."

"I see you have been mending that fence in the three-cornered paddock," remarked Mr. Chattaway, passing to another subject, and speaking in a different tone. Possibly, he had had enough of the last.

"Yes," said George. "You would not mend it, and therefore I have had it done. I cannot let my cattle get into the pound. I shall deduct the expense from the rent."

"You'll not," said Mr. Chattaway. "I won't be at the cost of a penny-piece of it."

"Oh yes, you will," returned George, equably. "The damage was done by your team, through your waggoner's carelessness, and the cost of making it good lies with you. Have you anything more to say to me?" he asked, after a pause. "I am very busy this morning."

"Only this," replied Mr. Chattaway, in significant tones. "That the more you encourage Rupert Trevlyn, by making him a companion, the worse it will be for him."

George lifted his hat in salutation: he could only be a gentleman, even to Chattaway. The master of Trevlyn Hold replied by an ungracious nod, and turned his horse back down the lane. As George rode on, he met Edith and Emily Chattaway—the children, as Octave had styled them—running towards him at full speed. They had seen their father, and were hastening after him. Maude came up more leisurely. George stooped to shake hands with her.

"You look pale and ill, Maude," he said, his low voice full of sympathy, his hand retaining hers. "Is it about Rupert?"

"Yes," she replied, striving to keep down her tears. "He was not allowed to come in last night. He has been sent away without breakfast this morning."

"I know all about it," said George. "I met Rupert just now, and he told me. I asked him if he would go to Nora for some breakfast—I could not do less, you know," added George, musingly, as if debating the question with himself. "But he declined. I am almost glad he did."

Maude was surprised. "Why?" she asked.

"Because I have an idea—I have felt it for some time—that any attention show to Rupert, no matter by whom, only makes his position worse with Chattaway. And Chattaway has now confirmed it, Maude, by telling me so."

Maude's eyelids drooped. "Oh, how sad it is!" she ex-

claimed, with emotion—"and for one in his weak state! If he were only strong as the rest of us are, it would be of less importance. I fear—I do fear that he must have slept under the trees in the avenue," she continued, lifting her eyes in her distress. "Mr. Chattaway inquired where he had passed the night, and Rupert answered——"

"I can relieve your fears so far, Maude," interrupted George, glancing round, as if to make sure that no ears were near. "He was at old Canham's."

Maude heaved a deep sigh in her relief. "You are certain, George?"

"Yes, yes. Rupert told me so just now. He said how hard he found the settle. Here come your charges back again, Maude; so I will say good-bye."

She suffered her hand to linger in his, but her heart was too full to speak. George bent lower.

"Do not make the grief heavier than you can bear, Maude. It *is* grief—real grief; but happier times may be in store for Rupert—and for you."

He released her hand, and cantered down the lane; and the two girls came up, telling Maude that they should go home now, for they had walked long enough.

CHAPTER XV.

TORMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF TREVLYN HOLD.

THERE appeared to be no place on earth for Rupert Trevlyn. Most people have some little nook they can fit themselves into and call their own; but he had none. He was only on sufferance at the Hold: he was made to feel stranger and stranger in it day by day.

What could be the source of this ill-feeling towards Rupert? Did some latent dread exist in the heart of Mr. Chattaway, and from thence penetrate to that of Cris, whispering that he, Rupert, the true heir of Trevlyn Hold, might at some future day, through some unforeseen and apparently impossible chance, come into his rights? No doubt it was so. There are no other means of accounting for it. It may be, they deemed that the more effectually he was kept under, treated as an object to be despised, lowered from his proper station, the less

chance would there be of that covert dread growing into a certainty. Whatever may have been its cause, Rupert was shamefully put upon. It is true that he sat at their table at meals—that he sat in the same sitting-room. But at table he was placed below the rest, at any inconvenient corner, where there was no room for his legs or his plate; where he was served last, and from the plainest dish. Mrs. Chattaway's heart would ache; but she could not alter it; it had ached from the same cause for many a year. Maude's ached: and Maude would decline the rich viands and eat of the plainer, that it might seem less hard to Rupert. In their evenings, when the rest were gathered round the fire, Rupert would be pushed back with the remote chairs and tables, and left there to make the best of the cold. Nothing in the world was so coveted by Rupert Trevlyn as a warm seat by the fire. It had been coveted by his father when he was Rupert's age, and perhaps Miss Diana remembered this, for she would call Rupert forward to the fire, and sharply rebuke those who would have kept him from it.

But Miss Diana was not always in the room; not often, in fact. She had her private sitting-room upstairs, as Mrs. Chattaway had hers; and both ladies more frequently retired to them in an evening, leaving the younger ones to enjoy themselves, with their books and their work, their music and their games, unrestrained by their presence. And poor Rupert was condemned to the remoter quarters of the room, where no one noticed him.

From that point alone, the cold, it was a bitter trial. Of weakly constitution, shivery by nature, a good fire was to Rupert Trevlyn almost an essential of existence. And it was what he rarely had at Trevlyn Hold. No wonder he was driven out. Even old Canham's wood fire, that he might get right into if he pleased, was an improvement upon the drawing-room at Trevlyn Hold.

But this digression is not getting on with the story, and you will not thank me for it. After parting with George Ryle, Maude Trevlyn, in obedience to the imperious mandates of her pupils, turned her steps homewards. Emily was a boisterous, troublesome, disobedient girl; Edith was more gentle, more amiable, in looks and disposition resembling her mother; but the example of her sisters was infectious, and spoiled her. There was another daughter, Amelia, older than they were, and at school at Barmester: a very disagreeable girl indeed.

"What was George Ryle saying to you, Maude?" somewhat insolently asked Emily.

"He was talking of Rupert," she incautiously answered, her mind buried in thought.

When they reached the Hold, Mr. Chattaway's horse was being led about by a groom, waiting for its master, who had returned, and was indoors. As they crossed the hall, they met him coming out of the breakfast-room. Octave was with him, talking.

"Cris would have waited, no doubt, papa, had he known you wanted him. He ate his breakfast in a hurry, and went out. I suppose he has gone to Blackstone."

"I particularly wanted him," grumbled Mr. Chattaway, who never was pleasant-tempered at the best of times, but would show himself unbearable if put out. "Cris knew I should want him this morning. First Rupert, and then Cris! Are you all going to turn disobedient?"

He made a halt at the door when he came to it, putting on his riding-glove. They stood grouped around him—Octave, Maude, and Emily. Edith had run out, and was near the horse.

"I would give a crown-piece to know what Mr. Rupert did with himself last night," he savagely uttered. "John," exalting his voice, "have you any idea where Rupert Trevlyn hid himself all night?"

The locking-out had been known to the household; had afforded it considerable gossip. John had taken part in it; had joined in its surmises and its comments; therefore he was not at fault for a ready answer.

"I don't know nothing certain, sir. It ain't unlikely as he went down to the Sheaf o' Corn, and slep' there."

"No, no, he did not," involuntarily burst from Maude.

It was an unlucky admission, for its tone was decisive, implying that she knew where he did sleep. She spoke in the moment's impulse. The Sheaf of Corn was the nearest public-house; it was notorious for its irregular doings, and Maude felt shocked at the bare suggestion that Rupert would enter such a place.

Mr. Chattaway turned to her. "Where *did* he sleep? What do you know about it?"

Maude's face turned hot and cold. She opened her lips to answer, but closed them again without speaking, the words dying away in her uncertainty and hesitation.

Mr. Chattaway may have felt surprised. He knew perfectly well that Maude had held no communication with Rupert that morning. He had seen Rupert come in; he had seen him go out; and Maude, the whole of the time, had not stirred from his presence. He bent his cold grey eyes upon her.

"From whom have you been hearing of Rupert's doings?"

It is very probable that Maude would have been quite at a loss for an answer. To say, "I know nothing of where Rupert slept," would have violated the rules of truth; but to avow that the lodge had sheltered him would not be expedient, for its inmates' sake. Maude, however, was saved a reply, for Emily spoke up before she had time to give one, ill-nature in her tone and in her words.

"Maude must have heard it from George Ryle. You saw her talking to him, papa. She said he had been speaking of Rupert."

Mr. Chattaway did not ask another question. It would have been superfluous to do so, in the conclusion he had come to. He believed that Rupert had slept at Trevlyn Farm. How else could George Ryle have had cognizance of his movements?

"They'll be hatching a plot to try to overthrow me," he muttered to himself as he went out to his horse: for his was one of those mean, suspicious natures which are always fancying the world is putting itself in antagonism to them. "Maude Ryle has been wanting to get me out of Trevlyn Hold ever since I came into it. From the very hour when she heard the Squire's will read, and found I had inherited, she has been planning and plotting for it. She'd rather see Rupert in it than me; and she'd rather see her pitiful son Treve in it than any. Yes, yes, Mr. Rupert, we know what you frequent Trevlyn Farm for. But it won't answer. It's waste of plans and waste of time; it's waste of wickedness. They must do away with England's laws before they can upset Squire Trevlyn's will. I'm safe in the estate. But it's not less annoying to know that my tenure is constantly being plotted against; hauled over and peered into, and turned and twisted about, to see if they can't find a flaw in it, or insert one of their own manufacture."

It was a strange thing that these fears should continually hold possession of the mind of the master of Trevlyn Hold. Not suspicion touching the plotting and the hatching; *that* came naturally to him; but latent fears lest his ownership should be shaken. A man who legally holds an estate, on which no shade of a suspicion can be cast, need not dread its

being wrested from him. It was in Squire Trevlyn's power to leave the Hold and its revenues to whom he would. Had he chosen to bequeath it to an utter stranger, it was in his power to do so: and he had bequeathed it to James Chattaway. Failing direct male heirs, it may be thought that Mr. Chattaway had as much right to it as any one else. At any rate, it had been the Squire's pleasure to bequeath it to him, and there the matter was at an end. *It was looked upon as at an end by every one except Chattaway.* Why, I say, should it not have been looked upon as at an end by him? Ay, there's the mystery. None can fathom the curious workings of the human heart. That the master of Trevlyn Hold was ever conscious of a dread that his tenure was to be some time disturbed, was indisputable. He never betrayed it to any living being by so much as a word; he strove to conceal it even from himself; he pretended to ignore it altogether: but there it was, down deep in his secret heart. There it remained, and there it tormented him; however unwilling he might have been to acknowledge the fact.

Could it be that a prevision of what was really to take place was cast upon him?—a mysterious foreshadowing of the future. There are people who tell us that such warnings come.

The singularity of the affair was, that no grounds could exist for this latent fear. Why, then, should it show itself? In point of right and justice, Rupert Trevlyn was undoubtedly the true heir; but right and justice cannot contend against law, as we know by the instances daily presented to our notice; and there was no more chance that Rupert could succeed in face of the Squire's will, than that old Canham at the lodge could succeed. Had the Squire's two sons been living, he could have willed the estate to Chattaway, had he chosen. Whence, then, arose the fear? Why, from that source whence it arises in many people—a bad conscience. It was true the estate had been legally left to him; he was secure in it by the power of the law; but he knew that his own handiwork, his deceit, had brought it to him; he knew that when he suppressed the news of the birth of Rupert, and suffered Squire Trevlyn to go to his grave uninformed of the fact, he was guilty of nothing less than a crime in the sight of God. Mr. Chattaway had heard of that inconvenient thing, retribution, and his fancy suggested that it might possibly overtake *him*.

If he had only known that he might have set his mind at rest as to the plotting and planning, he would have cared less to

oppose Rupert's visits to Trevlyn Farm. Nothing could be further from the thoughts of Rupert, or from George Ryle, than any plotting against Chattaway. Their evenings, when together, were spent in harmless conversation, in chess, in other rational ways, without so much as a reference to Chattaway. But that gentleman did not know it, and tormented himself accordingly.

He mounted his horse, and rode away. As he was passing Trevlyn Farm, buried in unpleasant thoughts, which of course turned upon that terrible bugbear of his life, hatching and plotting, he saw Nora Dickson at the fold-yard gate. A thought struck him, and he turned his horse's head towards her.

"How came your people to give Rupert Trevlyn a bed last night? They must know it would very much displease me."

"Give Rupert Trevlyn a bed!" repeated Nora, regarding Mr. Chattaway with the uncompromising stare which she was fond of according to that gentleman. "He did not have a bed here."

"No!" replied Mr. Chattaway.

"No," reiterated Nora. "What should he want with a bed here? Has he not his own at Trevlyn Hold? One bed there isn't much for him, when he might have expected to own the whole place; but I suppose he can at least count upon that."

Mr. Chattaway turned his horse short round, and rode away without another word. He always got the worst of it with Nora. A slight explosion of his private sentiments with regard to her was given to the air, and he again became absorbed on the subject of Rupert.

"Where, then, *did* he pass the night?"

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. CHATTAWAY'S OFFICE.

It was Nora's day for churning. The butter was made twice a week at Trevlyn Farm, and the making fell to Nora. She was sole priestess of the dairy. It was many and many a long year since any one but herself had interfered in it: except, indeed, in the actual churning. One of the men on the farm did that for her in a general way: and the words, "It was Nora's day for churning," would be looked upon by any one familiar with the executive of Trevlyn Farm as a figure of speech.