

FOR SALE

WHEAT FROM STONE... choice clay loam, 12... cement, 110, wind...

FARM, 60 ACRES... wheat, 21,000 bush...

SAND LOAM... choice sand, 100 feet...

ROAD, EAST... frame house, 12 rooms...

HIGHWAY, EAST... frame house, 12 rooms...

ROAD, EAST... frame house, 12 rooms...

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I hunted for it everywhere, and I came to the conclusion—the welcome conclusion—that Sir Wilfred had suddenly changed his mind, and either discovered the paper or taken it away with him. This morning the gentleman who came to me that night sent me some documents pertaining to the case he had come to consult me about...

"It can be destroyed now," said Clytie, in a low voice, and she took up the paper to tear it; but Mr. Granger swiftly took it from her. "I think not," he said grimly. "You seem to forget that I have the misfortune to be your legal adviser, and that it is my duty to guard your interest, even against yourself. I intend leaving this paper with you; but, being that you are not burdened with the scruples which hamper me, I will take charge of the paper."

"Thank you," her eyes downcast, her hands gripping each other tightly in her lap. "Is it necessary?" she asked, falteringly, "to make this known at once?" "Well, I don't know that it is absolutely necessary," replied Mr. Granger, after considering a moment or two; "that is to say, there is no immediate concern, at present only concerned, is yourself. While you are living no one else has any interest in the disposition of the property. Of course, you know, remember that if you were to die—which there is at present no likelihood of—Mr. Hesketh Cartton would inherit. But as the contingency is, as I am delighted to feel convinced, extremely remote, we need not trouble ourselves to consider it."

Clytie drew a long breath. Yes, if she had died before—she had married Jack, Mr. Hesketh Cartton would have succeeded. But no one could rob Sir Wilfred Cartton now. Her "sacrifice" had not been in vain. "Yes, I congratulate you, Miss Clytie," said Mr. Granger; "but, all the same, you must not feel hurt if I say that I regret the course things have taken, and I'm sorry that Sir Wilfred should have devised himself of his patrimony; and I tell you frankly that I think the estate, and, at any rate, a large proportion of the money, should have gone to him. I took a great fancy to the young fellow the night he came to me, and I have often thought that if you two could have met—But there's no use thinking of it. He was as proud as Lucifer, and as obstinate as a mule; and I suppose he has gone back to the wilds and we shall hear no more of him. He was, however, he paused—perhaps, Miss Clytie, you would like to offer him some sort of compromise. But there, again, what would be the use? I feel convinced that he wouldn't accept a penny."

"No, I am sure he would not," said Clytie; then, as Mr. Granger looked at her with some surprise, she added, stammeringly: "I mean, from what you say of him." "Oh, yes, yes," he assented. "Well, I must be going. When you think you would wish Sir Wilfred's renunciation and your consequent possession of the estate to be made public, let me know, and I will take the necessary steps. Of course, you must not keep the public in ignorance for an indefinite time; but we can hold our tongues for a few weeks or months."

"A few weeks or months," thought Clytie, with a heavy sigh; it would be all the same if it were a few years; Jack would not come back, and what was she to do about this renunciation? But, of course, by this time she would have left the Hall and gone back to poverty; but Mollie, with no little reason and much common sense, had pointed out to her that such a course would be inflicting an additional cruelty and wrong on Sir Wilfred, and insisted that it was absolutely Clytie's duty to live at the Hall and take care of the estate.

"He may come back at any moment," she had said; "and a nice kind of night it might be when I saw him that night in the churchyard, to say to him: 'You are Sir Wilfred Cartton!' and drag him into the church to see you! He would have fallen in love with you then, as he did later on at Withycombe."

"Are you so sure that he ever loved me?" said Clytie, with a sigh, and turning away to the window. "Sometimes I doubt," retorted Mollie, with something like a snort. "Am I sure that I've had my lunch, that I'm standing here, and that I'm going to ride over to see Percy—Lord Stanton? Yes, I am sure, sure as I am that I was a fool not to have held him and yelled for joy that afternoon he went. If I had done that, if he had done that, if he had seen you—But, there! What is the use of tearing one's hair over the night-havens?"

"I do not remember your face; you are a stranger, are you not?" "Yes, miss," said the girl, in a quiet voice, which attracted Clytie as the face had done. "I came to Bramley to find a situation."

Now Clytie knew that the housekeeper of the Hall wanted a house-

Mollie went to the Towers, and Clytie drove down to the town in the victoria to do some shopping. The carriage was passing through one of the narrow streets when its progress was barred by a small crowd which had collected around two men who were apparently fighting. At the moment of Clytie's arrival, one of the men had fallen heavily on the stone-paved road; and the crowd emitted that peculiar sound, half of sympathy, half of wolfish delight, which by reporters is called a "sensation." Clytie, raising herself slightly, looked over the heads of the people and saw a man, evidently the vanquished one, lying full length and motionless, his face covered with blood and mud. There seemed to be no one in authority, and the crowd appeared uncertain as to what it ought to do. The condition of the helpless man instantly appealed to Clytie's tender heart.

Obedient to the instincts of pity, she alighted from the victoria and made her way through the crowd, which respectfully drew back for her, for Clytie was known to every man, woman, and child in Bramley, and loved as well as respected. A woman with a shawl over her head supplied the information. "It's a fight, miss. It's Stephen Rawdon, he's been on the loose for some time past, and when he lets himself go, he's like a maniac, and don't know what he's doing any more than a man in the asylum. He's just mad, that's what he is. He picked a quarrel with a puffet stranger; he would fight, and he's got the worst of it. The other man wanted to hurt him; but, you see, miss, he had to hit him first to shake him off. It ain't the first fight Steve's had this day, either. Oh, yes, he's been enjoying himself; but he's a quiet fellow now."

Clytie bent over the unconscious man. Notwithstanding the dirt and the blood which disfigured his face, she was struck by his honesty and a certain something which indicated something better than a mere coward; and she remembered seeing the man, clean and in his right mind, on her walks and drives from the town. "Here comes a policeman," cried a voice. "Steve will be took to the station."

"No, no!" said Clytie, half-unconsciously, for the man looked too good for prison. "He must be taken to the hospital. Will some one carry him to the carriage?" As she spoke, a woman, with a shawl over her head, like most of the other women, made her way through the crowd and reached Clytie's side; but at Clytie's words, the woman drew back and stood, with the shawl drawn almost over her face. The policeman came up, thrusting the people aside in a quiet, masterly way; but at sight of Miss Bramley at the Hall, stood for a moment uncertain. Clytie turned to him quickly. "There has been an accident," she said. "I want this poor fellow taken to the hospital. You can take him in the carriage. I will walk. Tell the house-surgeon there that I sent the man."

Stephen Rawdon was carried to the carriage, and supported by the constable, was driven off. The crowd gathered round Clytie, murmuring sympathetically. "God bless you, miss!" cried an older woman. "You're a kind and an older heart! And he was only drunk, he was, and didn't know what he was doing."

The woman, who had drawn back but still stood near Clytie, did not join in the chorus of approval and benediction; but her eyes were fixed with a strange expression on Clytie's face; and, as the crowd melted away, the woman followed in the direction the carriage had taken.

CHAPTER XXVIII. Clytie drove to the hospital the next morning to inquire after the injured man, and was of course received with eager respect and attention by the authorities. The subscription from the Hall was the largest that had ever been given in the district, and Clytie was well known to the house surgeon and the staff of nurses. "He is very much better, Miss Bramley," said the house surgeon; "he came round very soon, and I found that he had received little or no injuries in the fight; in fact, the man can take a great deal in that way, he is very ill, but of course, by this time he has had just come through a bad winter, and will have to remain quiet for some time. It's a pity he should be so wild, for he is a fine fellow, and was a good and steady workman until a year ago; then something happened—some trouble about a sweetheart who jilted him, and he went, just swung round. I ought to add that he has had some mild intervals; that he has been working in the pit works quite regularly and steadily for some months."

"I am sorry," said Clytie, compassionately. "He did not look to me as if he were a bad character; he has such an honest, pleasant face."

The house-surgeon nodded. "Yes, I'm told that he was all right until this trouble occurred, and that he is one of the quietest of men, excepting when he launches out into one of these bouts of drinking."

"If there is anything I can do to help him," said Clytie, as she left, "please let me know."

"We have a vacancy at the Hall. Are you used to a housemaid's work?" "Yes, miss," replied the girl. "I have been accustomed to the work, and I can do plain sewing and mending."

"What is your name?" "Susan Marsh, miss."

"Well, Susan, if you will go up to the hall—you have references of course?" "Yes, miss; I acted as a stewardess on board the vessel I came in from Australia, and I have the head stewardess's letter."

Clytie nodded. "Very well, then; please go to the Hall and see Mrs. Hutton, and tell her that I hope she will be able to engage you."

Susan dropped a curtsy, her eyes cast down respectfully, and the carriage drove on. About a week later Clytie met the girl in one of the corridors, and paused to speak to her. "I see that Mrs. Hutton has engaged you, Susan," she said, "and I hope you are comfortable and happy."

"Yes, thank you, miss," replied Susan Marsh, in the quiet voice and manner which had taken Clytie's fancy. Clytie was passing on when she remembered that she wanted some repairing done to one of her dresses, which her maid, who had been absent a day or two, had not been able to do. She thought you could do some mending, Susan," she said. "I have some for you, if you will please come to my room."

Susan followed with the poiseless step which had already earned for her in the servants' hall the nickname of "The Mouse," and Clytie gave her the dress, asking her if she thought she could do it. "Oh, yes, miss," replied Susan. "Well, then, ask my maid to let you do it in the dressing-room," said Clytie.

The maid was a good-natured girl, with whom Susan had made friends, and Susan was installed in the dressing-room, and having accomplished the first piece of mending satisfactorily, was entrusted with other and similar tasks. She was an extremely silly girl, and Clytie rather liked having her near her, and often sat with her for a few minutes, talking about her work. One afternoon Clytie came into the room with a morning frock which needed a slight alteration. "Will you put your other work aside and do this for me at once, Susan?" she asked. "I want it to-morrow morning."

It was a rather more elaborate dress than Clytie was in the habit of wearing in the morning, but Susan understood why it was needed when she heard downstairs that Mr. Hesketh Cartton was coming to lunch the following day. Hesketh had not taken a meal at the Hall for some time, for the girl had been out on one or two occasions when he had called. Her presence seemed absolutely necessary to the convalescent; and on the next morning Clytie and Mollie rode over to the Towers, and Mollie's horse casting a shoe, they did not reach the Hall until a quarter of an hour after Mr. Hesketh Cartton had arrived. Clytie hurried to the drawing-room to greet him and apologize.

"Oh, please, don't mention it," he said, with a wave of his thin long hand. "After me, going on to the terrace, I have been been reading a book, but I will go out on to the terrace. I shall be grieved if you hurry."

The principal rooms, the reception-rooms, as they are called, at the Hall, were most of them in suite, and opened into each other by large doors or arched openings screened by curtains; and with the familiarity of one who had lived in the house, passed from the drawing-room, through the ante-room, crossed the small dining-room in which the lunch was laid, and so on to the terrace.

As he did so, Susan Marsh, with the step which justified her sobriquet of "Mouse," was passing the open door leading from the smaller hall to the dining-room, and saw him. She stopped suddenly, her eyes fixed on his face with a peculiar expression; then she hurried on, but before she had reached a point from which she could not have seen him, she stopped again and looked over her shoulder.

Hesketh Cartton was leaning against the stone rail of the terrace, looking at the view, and humming softly to himself—the embodiment of ease and serenity; but suddenly she saw him turn his head and look into the dining-room. There was no one there, for Sholes had finished laying the cloth and had gone to his pantry to wait until the young ladies had come down. Something in the expression of Mr. Hesketh Cartton's face arrested the Mouse's progress, and, in the attitude of one prepared to go on her way, she still remained, watching.

Hesketh Cartton, still humming, entered the room and stood by the table near to the head, where Clytie's chair was placed. His eyes glancing from side to side searchingly; then the long white hand was thrust into his breast, there was the flash of a vital, faint click of glass coming into contact with glass, and the next instant he sauntered from the room and passed, still singing softly, to the other end of the terrace.

The Mouse had remained motionless, so motionless that she might have been carved out of stone, and her face was like marble, only her eyes seemed alive. Suddenly, as if she had been restored to life and the power of movement by some magic, electric agency, she passed swiftly and with absolute noiselessness into the dining-room, caught up Clytie's wine-glass, replaced it by one from the buffet, and, with the other covered by her hand, darted out of the room and upstair to her own chamber. With great care she poured half of the colorless liquid contained in the glass into a small vial; then she stood with the glass in her hand and gazed at it, her brows drawn, her lips tightly set; and at last she filled the glass with water, and quickly, as if she were desirous of not giving herself time for consideration, drank the contents to the last drop.

Clytie came up rather late that night. It had been for Mollie and Percy—a very pleasant evening, and though absent-minded and preoccupied, she had thrust away her own grief and the terrible badinage with which Mollie had brightened the meal. Clytie found Susan Marsh waiting for her. "I am afraid I am very late, Susan," she said.

Susan murmured: "Not at all, miss," and helped Clytie out of her frock and proceeded to brush her hair; but suddenly she stopped and, staggering slightly, let the brushes fall from her hand. Clytie had been sitting with her head bent, her thoughts dwelling on Jack, the husband who had fled from her; now she awoke with a start, and, seeing Susan's face reflected in the looking-glass, uttered a cry of alarm. "Susan! What is the matter? Are you ill?" she cried.

Susan was as white as death, her eyes half-closed, and she clung to the back of the chair as if to prevent her self from falling. Clytie sprang up and caught her, as she swayed uncertainly, and managed to get her to a couch; then she ran to the bell; but she remembered that the other servant would be in bed by this time; and Susan, at the same moment, and in a feeble voice, begged her not to ring. Clytie caught up a bottle of sal volatile and gave her some, kneeling beside her and watching her. "Are you better?" she asked, anxiously. "What is it—a faint?"

"Yes, miss," said Susan, evidently struggling to retain the deadly faintness. "It is only that I have—please don't call anyone! I shall be better, quite well, in a moment or two."

"Oh, but you—frightened me!" said Clytie. "I must call Miss Mollie; she will not have gone to bed yet. Lean back—I shall not be a moment or two."

Apparently The Mouse was recovered, for in the afternoon she went out, and by a roundabout way which avoided the Pit Works and the principal street, walked to the hospital. The afternoon was sunny and warm, and Stephen Rawdon had been permitted to go out into the grounds. Still weak and shaky, he was sitting, brooding, on a seat screened by some shrubs from what wind there was, and he was roused from a review of his wretched life by the sound of a light footstep on the gravel. He looked up, and saw a woman coming toward him with bent head. "She wore a veil, and he could not see her face; but something vaguely familiar in her figure and her peculiar gait made him start and quiver, and, suddenly, as she was nearly up to him, he sprang unsteadily to his feet and cried, in a voice thick with emotion: "Mary!"

"Mary!" she raised her head, stopped short with a faint cry, and would have hurried past him, but he caught her arm, and, holding her, repeated the name, staring at her peculiar gait, made him start and quiver, and, suddenly, as she was nearly up to him, he sprang unsteadily to his feet and cried, in a voice thick with emotion: "Mary!"

"Let me go, Stevie," she said brokenly. "Better let me go!" "No," she said decidedly, though his voice shook; "not till you've told me all and everything. Sit here, sit, I say! I've been bad, and I'm weak still, but I'll hold you till you've spoken."

"You are better?" she faltered. "I was going up to inquire." "You knew—you've been here in Bramley, some time—hiding from me?" "Yes," she said, with bent head, her hands writhing together. "I—I saw you the day you were taken bad. Yes, I was hiding. I—I'm not fit for you to talk to, Stevie." The tears filled her eyes, and she moaned faintly. "Better let me go and—forget me."

"I can't forget you; you know I can't; I wish to God I could!" he responded bitterly. "You've never been out of my mind since. Why did you leave me like that, Mary?" he broke out, with a note of agony and reproach in his voice. "Because I was mad—yes, mad!" she said, with an agony that matched his own. "Don't ask me, Stevie. Just let me be as if—as if you'd never known me. I'm not fit—"

"You were mad, you say," he said, after a pause. "Yes, you must have been. It wasn't like you, my Mary, and so good and—straight—to deceive and desert the man as loved you."

"Yes, I deceived you; but I've been punished for it, Stevie—turn your face away!" Her voice grew so harsh and hoarse as to be almost inaudible. "My—my child—died of starvation." She hid her face in her hands. "He—half-drove, then sank back, trembling. "Tell me the villain's name, tell me his name!" he demanded savagely. "Just tell me that; I won't ask for anything more. His name?" She shook her head and drew a long breath.

"No, Oh, I know why you ask it of me, Stevie; I know what you'd do. More wrong! And a wrong that you'd suffer for! I shall never tell you, though he deserves it—Oh! Her hands fell from her face, and gripped each other, and she spoke through her clenched teeth. "He is a devil, a devil! If you knew—"

"I'm asking you," he said sternly. "And I would not tell you. Do you think I would let you into a crueler trouble than you've endured for my sake?" "It's for yours and mine," he said. "Is it right that a scoundrel such as he must be to ruin the girl I loved, and spoil my life and go off scot-free? Answer me that!"

"He will not go unpunished," she said solemnly. "There's a God still, Stevie; and He deals out punishment when and how He pleases. There's a text as says: 'Vengeance is mine, and I—I can wait! I'll go now, Stevie. I'm—I'm glad you're well again, and—and if I'd dare ask I'd beg you, on my knees, to forget me, to put me out of your life, and turn over a new leaf.' He laughed bitterly, mockingly. "Where are you living, hiding?" he asked.