

Chapter 46

Why, there are maidens of heroic touch,
And yet they seem like things of gossamer
You'd pinch the life out of, as out of moths.
O, it is not loud tones and mouthingness
'Tis not the arms akimbo and large strides,
That makes a woman's force. The tiniest birds,
With softest downy breasts, have passions in them
And are brave with love.

ESTHER was so placed in the court, under Mrs Transome's wing as to see and hear everything without effort. Harold had received them at the hotel, and had observed that Esther looked ill, and was unusually abstracted in her manner, but this seemed to be sufficiently accounted for by her sympathetic anxiety about the result of a trial in which the prisoner at the bar was a friend, and in which both her father and himself were important witnesses. Mrs Transome had no reluctance to keep a small secret from her son, and no betrayal was made of that previous 'engagement' of Esther's with her father. Harold was particularly delicate and unobtrusive in his attentions to-day: he had the consciousness that he was going to behave in a way that would gratify Esther and win her admiration, and we are all of us made more graceful by the inward presence of what we believe to be a generous purpose; our actions move to a hidden music - 'a melody that's sweetly pitched in tune'.

If Esther had been less absorbed by supreme feelings, she would have been aware that she was an object of special notice. In the bare squareness of a public hall, where there was not one jutting angle to hang a guess or a thought upon, not an image or a bit of colour to stir the fancy, and where the only objects of speculation, of admiration, or of any interest whatever, were human beings, and especially the human beings that occupied positions indicating some importance, the notice bestowed on Esther would not have been surprising, even if it had been merely a tribute to her youthful charm, which was well companioned by Mrs Transome's elderly majesty. But it was due also to whisperings that she was an hereditary claimant of the Transome estates, whom Harold Transome was about to marry. Harold himself had of late not cared to conceal either the fact or the probability: they both tended rather to his honour than his dishonour. And to-day,

when there was a good proportion of Trebians present, the whisperings spread rapidly.

The court was still more crowded than on the previous day, when our poor acquaintance Dredge and his two collier companions were sentenced to a year's imprisonment with hard labour, and the more enlightened prisoner, who stole the Debarrys' plate, to transportation for life. Poor Dredge had cried, had wished he'd 'never heard of a 'lection,' and in spite of sermons from the jail chaplain, fell back on the explanation that this was a world in which Spratt and Old Nick were sure to get the best of it; so that in Dredge's case, at least, most observers must have had the melancholy conviction that there had been no enhancement of public spirit and faith in progress from that wave of political agitation which had reached the Sproxtton Pits.

But curiosity was necessarily at a higher pitch to-day, when the character of the prisoner and the circumstances of his offence were of a highly unusual kind. As soon as Felix appeared at the bar, a murmur rose and spread into a loud buzz, which continued until there had been repeated authoritative calls for silence in the court. Rather singularly, it was now for the first time that Esther had a feeling of pride in him on the ground simply of his appearance. At this moment, when he was the centre of a multitudinous gaze, which seemed to act on her own vision like a broad unmitigated daylight, she felt that there was something pre-eminent in him, notwithstanding the vicinity of numerous gentlemen. No apple-woman would have admired him; not only to feminine minds like Mrs Tiliot's, but to many minds in coat and waistcoat, there was something dangerous and perhaps unprincipled in his bare throat and great Gothic head; and his somewhat massive person would doubtless have come out very oddly from the hands of a fashionable tailor of that time. But as Esther saw his large grey eyes looking round calmly and undefiantly, first at the audience generally, and then with a more observant expression at the lawyers and other persons immediately around him, she felt that he bore the outward stamp of a distinguished nature. Forgive her if she needed this satisfaction: all of us - whether men or women - are liable to this weakness of liking to have our preference justified before others as well as ourselves. Esther said inwardly, with a certain triumph, that Felix Holt looked as worthy to be chosen in the midst of this large assembly, as he had ever looked in their tete-a-tete under the sombre light of the little parlour in Malthouse Yard.

Esther had felt some relief in hearing from her father that Felix had insisted on doing without his mother's presence; and since to Mrs Holt's imagination, notwithstanding her general desire to have her character inquired into, there was no greatly consolatory difference between being a witness and a criminal, and an appearance of any kind 'before the judge' could hardly be made to suggest anything

definite that would overcome the dim sense of unalleviated disgrace, she had been less inclined than usual to complain of her son's decision. Esther had shuddered beforehand at the inevitable farce there would be in Mrs Holt's testimony. But surely Felix would lose something for want of a witness who could testify to his behaviour in the morning before he became involved in the tumult?

'He is really a fine young fellow,' said Harold, coming to speak to Esther after a colloquy with the prisoner's solicitor. 'I hope he will not make a blunder in defending himself.'

'He is not likely to make a blunder,' said Esther. She had recovered her colour a little, and was brighter than she had been all the morning before.

Felix had seemed to include her in his general glance, but had avoided looking at her particularly. She understood how delicate feeling for her would prevent this, and that she might safely look at him, and towards her father, whom she could see in the same direction. Turning to Harold to make an observation, she saw that he was looking towards the same point, but with an expression on his face that surprised her.

'Dear me,' she said, prompted to speak without any reflection; 'how angry you look! I never saw you look so angry before. It is not my father you are looking at?'

'Oh no ! I am angry at something I'm looking away from,' said Harold, making an effort to drive back the troublesome demon who would stare out at window. 'It's that Jermyn,' he added, glancing at his mother as well as Esther. 'He will thrust himself under my eyes everywhere since I refused him an interview and returned his letter. I'm determined never to speak to him directly again, if I can help it.'

Mrs Transome heard with a changeless face. She had for some time been watching, and had taken on her marble look of immobility. She said an inward bitter 'Of course!' to everything that was unpleasant.

After this Esther soon became impatient of all speech: her attention was riveted on the proceedings of the court, and on the mode in which Felix bore himself. In the case for the prosecution there was nothing more than a reproduction, with irrelevancies added by witnesses, of the facts already known to us. Spratt had retained consciousness enough, in the midst of his terror, to swear that, when he was tied to the finger-post, Felix was presiding over the actions of the mob. The landlady of the Seven Stars, who was indebted to Felix for rescue from pursuit by some drunken rioters, gave evidence that went to prove his assumption of leadership prior to the assault on Spratt, -

remembering only that he had called away her pursuers to 'better sport'. Various respectable witnesses swore to Felix's 'encouragement' of the rioters who were dragging Spratt in King Street; to his fatal assault on Tucker; and to his attitude in front of the drawing-room window at the Manor.

Three other witnesses gave evidence of expressions used by the prisoner, tending to show the character of the acts with which he was charged. Two were Treby tradesmen, the third was a clerk from Duffield. The clerk had heard Felix speak at Duffield; the Treby men had frequently heard him declare himself on public matters; and they all quoted expressions which tended to show that he had a virulent feeling against the respectable shop-keeping class, and that nothing was likely to be more congenial to him than the gutting of retailers' shops. No one else knew - the witnesses themselves did not know fully - how far their strong perception and memory on these points was due to a fourth mind, namely, that of Mr John Johnson, the attorney, who was nearly related to one of the Treby witnesses, and a familiar acquaintance of the Duffield clerk. Man cannot be defined as an evidence-giving animal; and in the difficulty of getting up evidence on any subject, there is room for much unrecognised action of diligent persons who have the extra stimulus of some private motive. Mr Johnson was present in court to-day, but in a modest, retired situation. He had come down to give information to Mr Jermyn, and to gather information in other quarters, which was well illuminated by the appearance of Esther in company with the Transomes.

When the case for the prosecution closed, all strangers thought that it looked black for the prisoner. In two instances only Felix had chosen to put a cross-examining question. The first was to ask Spratt if he did not believe that his having been tied to the post had saved him from a probably mortal injury? The second was to ask the tradesman who swore to his having heard Felix tell the rioters to leave Tucker alone and come along with him, whether he had not, shortly before, heard cries among the mob summoning to an attack on the wine-vaults and brewery.

Esther had hitherto listened closely but calmly. She knew that there would be this strong adverse testimony; and all her hopes and fears were bent on what was to come beyond it. It was when the prisoner was asked what he had to adduce in reply that she felt herself in the grasp of that tremor which does not disable the mind, but rather gives keener consciousness of a mind having a penalty of body attached to it.

There was a silence as of night when Felix Holt began to speak. His voice was firm and clear: he spoke with simple gravity, and evidently

without any enjoyment of the occasion. Esther had never seen his face look so weary.

'My Lord, I am not going to occupy the time of the court with unnecessary words. I believe the witnesses for the prosecution have spoken the truth as far as a superficial observation would enable them to do it; and I see nothing that can weigh with the jury in my favour, unless they believe my statement of my own motives, and the testimony that certain witnesses will give to my character and purposes as being inconsistent with my willingly abetting disorder. I will tell the court in as few words as I can, how I got entangled in the mob, how I came to attack the constable, and how I was led to take a course which seems rather mad to myself, now I look back upon it.'

Felix then gave a concise narrative of his motives and conduct on the day of the riot, from the moment when he was startled into quitting his work by the earlier uproar of the morning. He omitted, of course, his visit to Malthouse Yard, and merely said that he went out to walk again after returning to quiet his mother's mind. He got warmed by the story of his experience, which moved him more strongly than ever, now he recalled it in vibrating words before a large audience of his fellow-men. The sublime delight of truthful speech to one who has the great gift of uttering it, will make itself felt even through the pangs of sorrow.

'That is all I have to say for myself, my Lord. I pleaded 'Not guilty' to the charge of manslaughter, because I know that word may carry a meaning which would not fairly apply to my act. When I threw Tucker down, I did not see the possibility that he would die from a sort of attack which ordinarily occurs in fighting without any fatal effect. As to my assaulting a constable, it was a quick choice between two evils: I should else have been disabled. And he attacked me under a mistake about my intentions. I'm not prepared to say I never would assault a constable where I had more chance of deliberation. I certainly should assault him if I saw him doing anything that made my blood boil: I reverence the law, but not where it is a pretext for wrong, which it should be the very object of law to hinder. I consider that I should be making an unworthy defence, if I let the court infer from what I say myself, or from what is said by my witnesses, that because I am a man who hates drunken disorder, or any wanton harm, therefore I am a man who would never fight against authority. I hold it blasphemy to say that a man ought not to fight against authority: there is no great religion and no great freedom that has not done it, in the beginning. It would be impertinent for me to speak of this now, if I did not need to say in my own defence, that I should hold myself the worst sort of traitor if I put my hand either to fighting or disorder - which must mean injury to somebody - if I were not urged to it by what I hold to be sacred feelings, making a sacred duty either to my own manhood

or to my fellow-man. And certainly,' Felix ended with a strong ring of scorn in his voice, I never held it a sacred duty to try and get a Radical candidate returned for North Loamshire, by willingly heading a drunken howling mob, whose public action must consist in breaking windows, destroying hard-got produce, and endangering the lives of men and women. I have no more to say, my Lord.'

'I foresaw he would make a blunder,' said Harold, in a low voice to Esther. Then, seeing her shrink a little, he feared she might suspect him of being merely stung by the allusion to himself. 'I don't mean what he said about the Radical candidate,' he added hastily, in correction. 'I don't mean the last sentence. I mean that whole peroration of his, which he ought to have left unsaid. It has done him harm with the jury - they won't understand it, or rather will misunderstand it. And I'll answer for it, it has soured the judge. It remains to be seen what we witnesses can say for him, to nullify the effect of what he has said for himself. I hope the attorney has done his best in collecting the evidence: I understand the expense of the witnesses is undertaken by some Liberals at Glasgow and in Lancashire friends of Holt's. But I suppose your father has told you.'

The first witness called for the defence was Mr Lyon. The gist of his statements was, that from the beginning of September last until the day of election he was in very frequent intercourse with the prisoner; that he had become intimately acquainted with his character and views of life, and his conduct with respect to the election, and that these were totally inconsistent with any other supposition than that his being involved in the riot, and his fatal encounter with the constable, were due to the calamitous failure of a bold but good purpose. He stated further that he had been present when an interview had occurred in his own house between the prisoner and Mr Harold Transome, who was then canvassing for the representation of North Loamshire. That the object of the prisoner in seeking this interview had been to inform Mr Transome of treating given in his name to the workmen in the pits and on the canal at Sproxton, and to remonstrate against its continuance; the prisoner fearing that disturbance and mischief might result from what he believed to be the end towards which this treating was directed - namely, the presence of these men on the occasions of the nomination and polling. Several times after this interview, Mr Lyon said, he had heard Felix Holt recur to the subject therein discussed with expressions of grief and anxiety. He himself was in the habit of visiting Sproxton in his ministerial capacity: he knew fully what the prisoner had done there in order to found a night-school, and was certain that the prisoner's interest in the working men of that district turned entirely on the possibility of converting them somewhat to habits of soberness and to a due care for the instruction of their children. Finally, he stated that the prisoner, in compliance with his request, had been present at Duffield

on the day of the nomination, and had on his return expressed himself with strong indignation concerning the employment of the Sproxtton men on that occasion, and what he called the wickedness of hiring blind violence.

The quaint appearance and manner of the little Dissenting minister could not fail to stimulate the peculiar wit of the bar. He was subjected to a troublesome cross-examination, which he bore with wide-eyed shortsighted quietude and absorption in the duty of truthful response. On being asked, rather sneeringly, if the prisoner was not one of his flock? he answered, in that deeper tone which made one of the most effective transitions of his varying voice -

'Nay - would to God he were! I should then feel that the great virtues and the pure life I have beheld in him were a witness to the efficacy of the faith I believe in and the discipline of the church whereunto I belong.'

Perhaps it required a larger power of comparison than was possessed by any of that audience to appreciate the moral elevation of an Independent minister who could utter those words. Nevertheless there was a murmur, which was clearly one of sympathy.

The next witness, and the one on whom the interest of the spectators was chiefly concentrated, was Harold Transome. There was a decided predominance of Tory feeling in the court, and the human disposition to enjoy the infliction of a little punishment on an opposite party, was, in this instance, of a Tory complexion. Harold was keenly alive to this, and to everything else that might prove disagreeable to him in his having to appear in the witness-box. But he was not likely to lose his self-possession, or to fail in adjusting himself gracefully, under conditions which most men would find it difficult to carry without awkwardness. He had generosity and candour enough to bear Felix Holt's proud rejection of his advances without any petty resentment; he had all the susceptibilities of a gentleman; and these moral qualities gave the right direction to his acumen, in judging of the behaviour that would best secure his dignity. Everything requiring self-command was easier to him because of Esther's presence; for her admiration was just then the object which this well-tanned man of the world had it most at heart to secure.

When he entered the witness-box he was much admired by the ladies amongst the audience, many of whom sighed a little at the thought of his wrong course in politics. He certainly looked like a handsome portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, in which that remarkable artist had happily omitted the usual excess of honeyed blandness mixed with alert intelligence, which is hardly compatible with the state of man out of paradise. He stood not far off Felix; and the two Radicals certainly

made a striking contrast. Felix might have come from the hands of a sculptor in the later Roman period, when the plastic impulse was stirred by the grandeur of barbaric forms - when rolled collars were not yet conceived, and satin stocks were not.

Harold Transome declared that he had had only one interview with the prisoner: it was the interview referred to by the previous witness, in whose presence and in whose house it was begun. The interview, however, was continued beyond the observation of Mr Lyon. The prisoner and himself quitted the Dissenting minister's house in Malthouse Yard together, and proceeded to the office of Mr Jermyn, who was then conducting electioneering business on his behalf. His object was to comply with Holt's remonstrance by inquiring into the alleged proceedings at Sproxtton, and, if possible to put a stop to them. Holt's language, both in Malthouse Yard and in the attorney's office, was strong: he was evidently indignant, and his indignation turned on the danger of employing ignorant men excited by drink on an occasion of popular concourse. He believed that Holt's sole motive was the prevention of disorder, and what he considered the demoralisation of the workmen by treating. The event had certainly justified his remonstrances. He had not had any subsequent opportunities of observing the prisoner; but if any reliance was to be placed on a rational conclusion, it must, he thought, be plain that the anxiety thus manifested by Holt was a guarantee of the statement he had made as to his motives on the day of the riot. His entire impression from Holt's manner in that single interview was, that he was a moral and political enthusiast, who, if he sought to coerce others, would seek to coerce them into a difficult, and perhaps impracticable, scrupulosity.

Harold spoke with as noticeable a directness and emphasis, as if what he said could have no reaction on himself. He had of course not entered unnecessarily into what occurred in Jermyn's office. But now he was subjected to a cross-examination on this subject, which gave rise to some subdued shrugs, smiles, and winks, among county gentlemen.

The questions were directed so as to bring out, if possible, some indication that Felix Holt was moved to his remonstrance by personal resentment against the political agents concerned in setting on foot the treating at Sproxtton, but such questioning is a sort of target-shooting that sometimes hits about widely. The cross-examining counsel had close connections among the Tories of Loamshire, and enjoyed his business to-day. Under the fire of various questions about Jermyn and the agent employed by him at Sproxtton, Harold got warm, and in one of his replies said, with his rapid sharpness -

'Mr Jermyn was my agent then, not now: I have no longer any but hostile relations with him.'

The sense that he had shown a slight heat would have vexed Harold more if he had not got some satisfaction out of the thought that Jermyn heard those words. He recovered his good temper quickly, and when, subsequently, the question came -

'You acquiesced in the treating of the Sproxton men, as necessary to the efficient working of the reformed constituency?' Harold replied, with quiet fluency -

'Yes; on my return to England, before I put up for North Loamshire, I got the best advice from practised agents, both Whig and Tory. They all agreed as to electioneering measures.'

The next witness was Michael Brincey, otherwise Mike Brindle, who gave evidence of the sayings and doings of the prisoner amongst the Sproxton men. Mike declared that Felix went 'uncommon again' drink, and pitch-and-toss, and quarrelling, and sich,' and was 'all for schooling and bringing up the little chaps'; but on being cross-examined, he admitted that he 'couldn't give much account'; that Felix did talk again' idle folks, whether poor or rich, and that most like he meant the rich, who had 'a rights to be idle', which was what he, Mike, liked himself sometimes, though for the most part he was 'a hard-working butty'. On being checked for this superfluous allegation of his own theory and practice, Mike became timidly conscious that answering was a great mystery beyond the reaches of a butty's soul, and began to err from defect instead of excess. However, he reasserted that what Felix most wanted was, 'to get 'em to set up a school for the little chaps'.

With the two succeeding witnesses, who swore to the fact that Felix had tried to lead the mob along Hobb's Lane instead of towards the Manor, and to the violently threatening character of Tucker's attack on him, the case for the defence was understood to close.

Meanwhile Esther had been looking on and listening with growing misery, in the sense that all had not been said which might have been said on behalf of Felix. If it was the jury who were to be acted on, she argued to herself, there might have been an impression made on their feeling which would determine their verdict. Was it not constantly said and seen that juries pronounced Guilty or Not Guilty from sympathy for or against the accused? She was too inexperienced to check her own argument by thoroughly representing to herself the course of things: how the counsel for the prosecution would reply, and how the judge would sum up, with the object of cooling down sympathy into deliberation. What she had painfully pressing on her inward vision

was, that the trial was coming to an end, and that the voice of right and truth had not been strong enough.

When a woman feels purely and nobly, that ardour of hers which breaks through formulas too rigorously urged on men by daily practical needs, makes one of her most precious influences: she is the added impulse that shatters the stiffening crust of cautious experience. Her inspired ignorance gives a sublimity to actions so incongruously simple, that otherwise they would make men smile. Some of that ardour which has flashed out and illuminated all poetry and history was burning to-day in the bosom of sweet Esther Lyon. In this, at least, her woman's lot was perfect: that the man she loved was her hero; that her woman's passion and her reverence for rarest goodness rushed together in an undivided current. And to-day they were making one danger, one terror, one irresistible impulse for her heart. Her feelings were growing into a necessity for action, rather than a resolve to act. She could not support the thought that the trial would come to an end, that sentence would be passed on Felix, and that all the while something had been omitted which might have been said for him. There had been no witness to tell what had been his behaviour and state of mind just before the riot. She must do it. It was possible. There was time. But not too much time. All other agitation became merged in eagerness not to let the moment escape. The last witness was being called. Harold Transome had not been able to get back to her on leaving the witness-box, but Mr Lingon was close by her. With firm quickness she said to him -

'Pray tell the attorney that I have evidence to give for the prisoner - lose no time.'

'Do you know what you are going to say, my dear?' said Mr Lingon, looking at her in astonishment.

'Yes - I entreat you, for God's sake,' said Esther, in that low tone of urgent beseeching which is equivalent to a cry; and with a look of appeal more penetrating still, 'I would rather die than not do it.'

The old rector, always leaning to the good-natured view of things, felt chiefly that there seemed to be an additional chance for the poor fellow who had got himself into trouble. He disputed no farther, but went to the attorney.

Before Harold was aware of Esther's intention she was on her way to the witness-box. When she appeared there, it was as if a vibration, quick as light, had gone through the court and had shaken Felix himself, who had hitherto seemed impassive. A sort of gleam seemed to shoot across his face, and any one close to him could have seen that his hand, which lay on the edge of the dock, trembled.

At the first moment Harold was startled and alarmed; the next, he felt delight in Esther's beautiful aspect, and in the admiration of the court. There was no blush on her face: she stood, divested of all personal considerations whether of vanity or shyness. Her clear voice sounded as it might have done if she had been making a confession of faith. She began and went on without query or interruption. Every face looked grave and respectful.

'I am Esther Lyon, the daughter of Mr Lyon, the Independent minister at Treby, who has been one of the witnesses for the prisoner. I know Felix Holt well. On the day of the election at Treby, when I had been much alarmed by the noises that reached me from the main street, Felix Holt came to call upon me. He knew that my father was away, and he thought that I should be alarmed by the sounds of disturbance. It was about the middle of the day, and he came to tell me that the disturbance was quieted, and that the streets were nearly emptied. But he said he feared that the men would collect again after drinking, and that something worse might happen later in the day. And he was in much sadness at this thought. He stayed a little while, and then he left me. He was very melancholy. His mind was full of great resolutions that came from his kind feeling towards others. It was the last thing he would have done to join in riot or to hurt any man, if he could have helped it. His nature is very noble; he is tender-hearted; he could never have had any intention that was not brave and good.'

There was something so naive and beautiful in this action of Esther's, that it conquered every low or petty suggestion even in the commonest minds. The three men in that assembly who knew her best - even her father and Felix Holt - felt a thrill of surprise mingling with their admiration. This bright, delicate, beautiful-shaped thing that seemed most like a toy or ornament - some hand had touched the chords, and there came forth music that brought tears. Half a year before, Esther's dread of being ridiculous spread over the surface of her life; but the depth below was sleeping.

Harold Transome was ready to give her his hand and lead her back to her place. When she was there, Felix, for the first time, could not help looking towards her, and their eyes met in one solemn glance.

Afterwards Esther found herself unable to listen so as to form any judgment on what she heard. The acting out of that strong impulse had exhausted her energy. There was a brief pause, filled with a murmur, a buzz, and much coughing. The audience generally felt as if dull weather was setting in again. And under those auspices the counsel for the prosecution got up to make his reply. Esther's deed had its effect beyond the momentary one, but the effect was not visible in the rigid necessities of legal procedure. The counsel's duty of

restoring all unfavourable facts to due prominence in the minds of the jurors, had its effect altogether reinforced by the summing-up of the judge. Even the bare discernment of facts, much more their arrangement with a view to inferences, must carry a bias: human impartiality, whether judicial or not, can hardly escape being more or less loaded. It was not that the judge had severe intentions; it was only that he saw with severity. The conduct of Felix was not such as inclined him to indulgent consideration, and, in his directions to the jury, that mental attitude necessarily told on the light in which he placed the homicide. Even to many in the court who were not constrained by judicial duty, it seemed that though this high regard felt for the prisoner by his friends, and especially by a generous-hearted woman, was very pretty, such conduct as his was not the less dangerous and foolish and assaulting and killing a constable was not the less an offence to be regarded without leniency.

Esther seemed now so tremulous, and looked so ill, that Harold begged her to leave the court with his mother and Mr Lingon. He would come and tell her the issue. But she said, quietly, that she would rather stay; she was only a little overcome by the exertion of speaking. She was inwardly resolved to see Felix to the last moment before he left the court.

Though she could not follow the address of the counsel or the judge, she had a keen ear for what was brief and decisive. She heard the verdict, 'Guilty of manslaughter.' And every word uttered by the judge in pronouncing sentence fell upon her like an unforgettable sound that would come back in dreaming and in waking. She had her eyes on Felix, and at the word, 'Imprisonment for four years,' she saw his lip tremble. But otherwise he stood firm and calm.

Esther gave a start from her seat. Her heart swelled with a horrible sensation of pain; but, alarmed lest she should lose her self-command, she grasped Mrs Transome's hand, getting some strength from that human contact.

Esther saw that Felix had turned. She could no longer see his face. 'Yes,' she said, drawing down her veil, 'let us go.'