

Chapter IX - To Garum Firs

While the possible troubles of Maggie's future were occupying her father's mind, she herself was tasting only the bitterness of the present. Childhood has no forebodings; but then, it is soothed by no memories of outlived sorrow.

The fact was, the day had begun ill with Maggie. The pleasure of having Lucy to look at, and the prospect of the afternoon visit to Garum Firs, where she would hear uncle Pullet's musical box, had been marred as early as eleven o'clock by the advent of the hair-dresser from St. Ogg's, who had spoken in the severest terms of the condition in which he had found her hair, holding up one jagged lock after another and saying, 'See here! tut, tut, tut!' in a tone of mingled disgust and pity, which to Maggie's imagination was equivalent to the strongest expression of public opinion. Mr Rappit, the hair-dresser, with his well-anointed coronal locks tending wavily upward, like the simulated pyramid of flame on a monumental urn, seemed to her at that moment the most formidable of her contemporaries, into whose street at St. Ogg's she would carefully refrain from entering through the rest of her life.

Moreover, the preparation for a visit being always a serious affair in the Dodson family, Martha was enjoined to have Mrs Tulliver's room ready an hour earlier than usual, that the laying out of the best clothes might not be deferred till the last moment, as was sometimes the case in families of lax views, where the ribbon-strings were never rolled up, where there was little or no wrapping in silver paper, and where the sense that the Sunday clothes could be got at quite easily produced no shock to the mind. Already, at twelve o'clock, Mrs Tulliver had on her visiting costume, with a protective apparatus of brown holland, as if she had been a piece of satin furniture in danger of flies; Maggie was frowning and twisting her shoulders, that she might if possible shrink away from the prickliest of tuckers, while her mother was remonstrating, 'Don't, Maggie, my dear; don't make yourself so ugly!' and Tom's cheeks were looking particularly brilliant as a relief to his best blue suit, which he wore with becoming calmness, having, after a little wrangling, effected what was always the one point of interest to him in his toilet: he had transferred all the contents of his every-day pockets to those actually in wear.

As for Lucy, she was just as pretty and neat as she had been yesterday; no accidents ever happened to her clothes, and she was never uncomfortable in them, so that she looked with wondering pity at Maggie, pouting and writhing under the exasperating tucker. Maggie would certainly have torn it off, if she had not been checked by the remembrance of her recent humiliation about her hair; as it was, she confined herself to fretting and twisting, and behaving peevishly

about the card-houses which they were allowed to build till dinner, as a suitable amusement for boys and girls in their best clothes. Tom could build perfect pyramids of houses; but Maggie's would never bear the laying on the roof. It was always so with the things that Maggie made; and Tom had deduced the conclusion that no girls could ever make anything. But it happened that Lucy proved wonderfully clever at building; she handled the cards so lightly, and moved so gently, that Tom condescended to admire her houses as well as his own, the more readily because she had asked him to teach her. Maggie, too, would have admired Lucy's houses, and would have given up her own unsuccessful building to contemplate them, without ill temper, if her tucker had not made her peevish, and if Tom had not inconsiderately laughed when her houses fell, and told her she was 'a stupid.'

'Don't laugh at me, Tom!' she burst out angrily; 'I'm not a stupid. I know a great many things you don't.'

'Oh, I dare say, Miss Spitfire! I'd never be such a cross thing as you, making faces like that. Lucy doesn't do so. I like Lucy better than you; I wish Lucy was *my* sister.'

'Then it's very wicked and cruel of you to wish so,' said Maggie, starting up hurriedly from her place on the floor, and upsetting Tom's wonderful pagoda. She really did not mean it, but the circumstantial evidence was against her, and Tom turned white with anger, but said nothing; he would have struck her, only he knew it was cowardly to strike a girl, and Tom Tulliver was quite determined he would never do anything cowardly.

Maggie stood in dismay and terror, while Tom got up from the floor and walked away, pale, from the scattered ruins of his pagoda, and Lucy looked on mutely, like a kitten pausing from its lapping.

'Oh, Tom,' said Maggie, at last, going half-way toward him, 'I didn't mean to knock it down, indeed, indeed I didn't.'

Tom took no notice of her, but took, instead, two or three hard peas out of his pocket, and shot them with his thumbnail against the window, vaguely at first, but presently with the distinct aim of hitting a superannuated blue-bottle which was exposing its imbecility in the spring sunshine, clearly against the views of Nature, who had provided Tom and the peas for the speedy destruction of this weak individual.

Thus the morning had been made heavy to Maggie, and Tom's persistent coldness to her all through their walk spoiled the fresh air and sunshine for her. He called Lucy to look at the half-built bird's nest without caring to show it Maggie, and peeled a willow switch for

Lucy and himself, without offering one to Maggie. Lucy had said, 'Maggie, shouldn't *you* like one?' but Tom was deaf.

Still, the sight of the peacock opportunely spreading his tail on the stackyard wall, just as they reached Garum Firs, was enough to divert the mind temporarily from personal grievances. And this was only the beginning of beautiful sights at Garum Firs. All the farmyard life was wonderful there, - bantams, speckled and top-knotted; Friesland hens, with their feathers all turned the wrong way; Guinea-fowls that flew and screamed and dropped their pretty spotted feathers; pouter-pigeons and a tame magpie; nay, a goat, and a wonderful brindled dog, half mastiff, half bull-dog, as large as a lion. Then there were white railings and white gates all about, and glittering weathercocks of various design, and garden-walks paved with pebbles in beautiful patterns, - nothing was quite common at Garum Firs; and Tom thought that the unusual size of the toads there was simply due to the general unusualness which characterized uncle Pullet's possessions as a gentleman farmer. Toads who paid rent were naturally leaner. As for the house, it was not less remarkable; it had a receding centre, and two wings with battlemented turrets, and was covered with glittering white stucco.

Uncle Pullet had seen the expected party approaching from the window, and made haste to unbar and unchain the front door, kept always in this fortified condition from fear of tramps, who might be supposed to know of the glass case of stuffed birds in the hall, and to contemplate rushing in and carrying it away on their heads. Aunt Pullet, too, appeared at the doorway, and as soon as her sister was within hearing said, 'Stop the children, for God's sake! Bessy; don't let 'em come up the door-steps; Sally's bringing the old mat and the duster, to rub their shoes.'

Mrs Pullet's front-door mats were by no means intended to wipe shoes on; the very scraper had a deputy to do its dirty work. Tom rebelled particularly against this shoewiping, which he always considered in the light of an indignity to his sex. He felt it as the beginning of the disagreeables incident to a visit at aunt Pullet's, where he had once been compelled to sit with towels wrapped round his boots; a fact which may serve to correct the too-hasty conclusion that a visit to Garum Firs must have been a great treat to a young gentleman fond of animals, - fond, that is, of throwing stones at them.

The next disagreeable was confined to his feminine companions; it was the mounting of the polished oak stairs, which had very handsome carpets rolled up and laid by in a spare bedroom, so that the ascent of these glossy steps might have served, in barbarous times, as a trial by ordeal from which none but the most spotless virtue could have come off with unbroken limbs. Sophy's weakness

about these polished stairs was always a subject of bitter remonstrance on Mrs Glegg's part; but Mrs Tulliver ventured on no comment, only thinking to herself it was a mercy when she and the children were safe on the landing.

'Mrs Gray has sent home my new bonnet, Bessy,' said Mrs Pullet, in a pathetic tone, as Mrs Tulliver adjusted her cap.

'Has she, sister?' said Mrs Tulliver, with an air of much interest. 'And how do you like it?'

'It's apt to make a mess with clothes, taking 'em out and putting 'em in again,' said Mrs Pullet, drawing a bunch of keys from her pocket and looking at them earnestly, 'but it 'ud be a pity for you to go away without seeing it. There's no knowing what may happen.'

Mrs Pullet shook her head slowly at this last serious consideration, which determined her to single out a particular key.

'I'm afraid it'll be troublesome to you getting it out, sister,' said Mrs Tulliver; 'but I *should* like to see what sort of a crown she's made you.'

Mrs Pullet rose with a melancholy air and unlocked one wing of a very bright wardrobe, where you may have hastily supposed she would find a new bonnet. Not at all. Such a supposition could only have arisen from a too-superficial acquaintance with the habits of the Dodson family. In this wardrobe Mrs Pullet was seeking something small enough to be hidden among layers of linen, - it was a door-key.

'You must come with me into the best room,' said Mrs Pullet.

'May the children come too, sister?' inquired Mrs Tulliver, who saw that Maggie and Lucy were looking rather eager.

'Well,' said aunt Pullet, reflectively, 'it'll perhaps be safer for 'em to come; they'll be touching something if we leave 'em behind.'

So they went in procession along the bright and slippery corridor, dimly lighted by the semi-lunar top of the window which rose above the closed shutter; it was really quite solemn. Aunt Pullet paused and unlocked a door which opened on something still more solemn than the passage, - a darkened room, in which the outer light, entering feebly, showed what looked like the corpses of furniture in white shrouds. Everything that was not shrouded stood with its legs upward. Lucy laid hold of Maggie's frock, and Maggie's heart beat rapidly.

Aunt Pullet half-opened the shutter and then unlocked the wardrobe, with a melancholy deliberateness which was quite in keeping with the funereal solemnity of the scene. The delicious scent of rose-leaves that issued from the wardrobe made the process of taking out sheet after sheet of silver paper quite pleasant to assist at, though the sight of the bonnet at last was an anticlimax to Maggie, who would have preferred something more strikingly preternatural. But few things could have been more impressive to Mrs Tulliver. She looked all round it in silence for some moments, and then said emphatically, 'Well, sister, I'll never speak against the full crowns again!'

It was a great concession, and Mrs Pullet felt it; she felt something was due to it.

'You'd like to see it on, sister?' she said sadly. 'I'll open the shutter a bit further.'

'Well, if you don't mind taking off your cap, sister,' said Mrs Tulliver.

Mrs Pullet took off her cap, displaying the brown silk scalp with a jutting promontory of curls which was common to the more mature and judicious women of those times, and placing the bonnet on her head, turned slowly round, like a draper's lay-figure, that Mrs Tulliver might miss no point of view.

'I've sometimes thought there's a loop too much o' ribbon on this left side, sister; what do you think?' said Mrs Pullet.

Mrs Tulliver looked earnestly at the point indicated, and turned her head on one side. 'Well, I think it's best as it is; if you meddled with it, sister, you might repent.'

'That's true,' said aunt Pullet, taking off the bonnet and looking at it contemplatively.

'How much might she charge you for that bonnet, sister?' said Mrs Tulliver, whose mind was actively engaged on the possibility of getting a humble imitation of this *chef-d'oeuvre* made from a piece of silk she had at home.

Mrs Pullet screwed up her mouth and shook her head, and then whispered, 'Pullet pays for it; he said I was to have the best bonnet at Garum Church, let the next best be whose it would.'

She began slowly to adjust the trimmings, in preparation for returning it to its place in the wardrobe, and her thoughts seemed to have taken a melancholy turn, for she shook her head.

'Ah,' she said at last, 'I may never wear it twice, sister; who knows?'

'Don't talk o' that sister,' answered Mrs Tulliver. 'I hope you'll have your health this summer.'

'Ah! but there may come a death in the family, as there did soon after I had my green satin bonnet. Cousin Abbott may go, and we can't think o' wearing crape less nor half a year for him.'

'That *would* be unlucky,' said Mrs Tulliver, entering thoroughly into the possibility of an inopportune decease. 'There's never so much pleasure i' wearing a bonnet the second year, especially when the crowns are so chancy, - never two summers alike.'

'Ah, it's the way i' this world,' said Mrs Pullet, returning the bonnet to the wardrobe and locking it up. She maintained a silence characterized by head-shaking, until they had all issued from the solemn chamber and were in her own room again. Then, beginning to cry, she said, 'Sister, if you should never see that bonnet again till I'm dead and gone, you'll remember I showed it you this day.'

Mrs Tulliver felt that she ought to be affected, but she was a woman of sparse tears, stout and healthy; she couldn't cry so much as her sister Pullet did, and had often felt her deficiency at funerals. Her effort to bring tears into her eyes issued in an odd contraction of her face. Maggie, looking on attentively, felt that there was some painful mystery about her aunt's bonnet which she was considered too young to understand; indignantly conscious, all the while, that she could have understood that, as well as everything else, if she had been taken into confidence.

When they went down, uncle Pullet observed, with some acumen, that he reckoned the missis had been showing her bonnet, - that was what had made them so long upstairs. With Tom the interval had seemed still longer, for he had been seated in irksome constraint on the edge of a sofa directly opposite his uncle Pullet, who regarded him with twinkling gray eyes, and occasionally addressed him as 'Young sir.'

'Well, young sir, what do you learn at school?' was a standing question with uncle Pullet; whereupon Tom always looked sheepish, rubbed his hands across his face, and answered, 'I don't know.' It was altogether so embarrassing to be seated *tete-a-tete* with uncle Pullet, that Tom could not even look at the prints on the walls, or the flycages, or the wonderful flower-pots; he saw nothing but his uncle's gaiters. Not that Tom was in awe of his uncle's mental superiority; indeed, he had made up his mind that he didn't want to be a gentleman farmer, because he shouldn't like to be such a thin-legged, silly fellow as his uncle Pullet, - a molly-coddle, in fact. A boy's

sheepishness is by no means a sign of overmastering reverence; and while you are making encouraging advances to him under the idea that he is overwhelmed by a sense of your age and wisdom, ten to one he is thinking you extremely queer. The only consolation I can suggest to you is, that the Greek boys probably thought the same of Aristotle. It is only when you have mastered a restive horse, or thrashed a drayman, or have got a gun in your hand, that these shy juniors feel you to be a truly admirable and enviable character. At least, I am quite sure of Tom Tulliver's sentiments on these points. In very tender years, when he still wore a lace border under his outdoor cap, he was often observed peeping through the bars of a gate and making minatory gestures with his small forefinger while he scolded the sheep with an inarticulate burr, intended to strike terror into their astonished minds; indicating thus early that desire for mastery over the inferior animals, wild and domestic, including cockchafers, neighbors' dogs, and small sisters, which in all ages has been an attribute of so much promise for the fortunes of our race. Now, Mr Pullet never rode anything taller than a low pony, and was the least predatory of men, considering firearms dangerous, as apt to go off of themselves by nobody's particular desire. So that Tom was not without strong reasons when, in confidential talk with a chum, he had described uncle Pullet as a nincompoop, taking care at the same time to observe that he was a very 'rich fellow.'

The only alleviating circumstance in a *tete-a-tete* with uncle Pullet was that he kept a variety of lozenges and peppermint-drops about his person, and when at a loss for conversation, he filled up the void by proposing a mutual solace of this kind.

'Do you like peppermints, young sir?' required only a tacit answer when it was accompanied by a presentation of the article in question.

The appearance of the little girls suggested to uncle Pullet the further solace of small sweet-cakes, of which he also kept a stock under lock and key for his own private eating on wet days; but the three children had no sooner got the tempting delicacy between their fingers, than aunt Pullet desired them to abstain from eating it till the tray and the plates came, since with those crisp cakes they would make the floor 'all over' crumbs. Lucy didn't mind that much, for the cake was so pretty, she thought it was rather a pity to eat it; but Tom, watching his opportunity while the elders were talking, hastily stowed it in his mouth at two bites, and chewed it furtively. As for Maggie, becoming fascinated, as usual, by a print of Ulysses and Nausicaa, which uncle Pullet had bought as a 'pretty Scripture thing,' she presently let fall her cake, and in an unlucky movement crushed it beneath her foot, - a source of so much agitation to aunt Pullet and conscious disgrace to Maggie, that she began to despair of hearing the musical snuff-box to-day, till, after some reflection, it occurred to her that Lucy was in high

favor enough to venture on asking for a tune. So she whispered to Lucy; and Lucy, who always did what she was desired to do, went up quietly to her uncle's knee, and blush-all over her neck while she fingered her necklace, said, 'Will you please play us a tune, uncle?'

Lucy thought it was by reason of some exceptional talent in uncle Pullet that the snuff-box played such beautiful tunes, and indeed the thing was viewed in that light by the majority of his neighbors in Garum. Mr Pullet had *bought* the box, to begin with, and he understood winding it up, and knew which tune it was going to play beforehand; altogether the possession of this unique 'piece of music' was a proof that Mr Pullet's character was not of that entire nullity which might otherwise have been attributed to it. But uncle Pullet, when entreated to exhibit his accomplishment, never depreciated it by a too-ready consent. 'We'll see about it,' was the answer he always gave, carefully abstaining from any sign of compliance till a suitable number of minutes had passed. Uncle Pullet had a programme for all great social occasions, and in this way fenced himself in from much painful confusion and perplexing freedom of will.

Perhaps the suspense did heighten Maggie's enjoyment when the fairy tune began; for the first time she quite forgot that she had a load on her mind, that Tom was angry with her; and by the time 'Hush, ye pretty warbling choir,' had been played, her face wore that bright look of happiness, while she sat immovable with her hands clasped, which sometimes comforted her mother with the sense that Maggie could look pretty now and then, in spite of her brown skin. But when the magic music ceased, she jumped up, and running toward Tom, put her arm round his neck and said, 'Oh, Tom, isn't it pretty?'

Lest you should think it showed a revolting insensibility in Tom that he felt any new anger toward Maggie for this uncalled-for and, to him, inexplicable caress, I must tell you that he had his glass of cowslip wine in his hand, and that she jerked him so as to make him spill half of it. He must have been an extreme milksop not to say angrily, 'Look there, now!' especially when his resentment was sanctioned, as it was, by general disapprobation of Maggie's behavior.

'Why don't you sit still, Maggie?' her mother said peevishly.

'Little gells mustn't come to see me if they behave in that way,' said aunt Pullet.

'Why, you're too rough, little miss,' said uncle Pullet.

Poor Maggie sat down again, with the music all chased out of her soul, and the seven small demons all in again.

Mrs Tulliver, foreseeing nothing but misbehavior while the children remained indoors, took an early opportunity of suggesting that, now they were rested after their walk, they might go and play out of doors; and aunt Pullet gave permission, only enjoining them not to go off the paved walks in the garden, and if they wanted to see the poultry fed, to view them from a distance on the horse-block; a restriction which had been imposed ever since Tom had been found guilty of running after the peacock, with an illusory idea that fright would make one of its feathers drop off.

Mrs Tulliver's thoughts had been temporarily diverted from the quarrel with Mrs Glegg by millinery and maternal cares, but now the great theme of the bonnet was thrown into perspective, and the children were out of the way, yesterday's anxieties recurred.

'It weighs on my mind so as never was,' she said, by way of opening the subject, 'sister Glegg's leaving the house in that way. I'm sure I'd no wish t' offend a sister.'

'Ah,' said aunt Pullet, 'there's no accounting for what Jane 'ull do. I wouldn't speak of it out o' the family, if it wasn't to Dr. Turnbull; but it's my belief Jane lives too low. I've said so to Pullet often and often, and he knows it.'

'Why, you said so last Monday was a week, when we came away from drinking tea with 'em,' said Mr Pullet, beginning to nurse his knee and shelter it with his pocket-hand-kerchief, as was his way when the conversation took an interesting turn.

'Very like I did,' said Mrs Pullet, 'for you remember when I said things, better than I can remember myself. He's got a wonderful memory, Pullet has,' she continued, looking pathetically at her sister. 'I should be poorly off if he was to have a stroke, for he always remembers when I've got to take my doctor's stuff; and I'm taking three sorts now.'

'There's the 'pills as before' every other night, and the new drops at eleven and four, and the 'fervescing mixture 'when agreeable,'¹ rehearsed Mr Pullet, with a punctuation determined by a lozenge on his tongue.

'Ah, perhaps it 'ud be better for sister Glegg if *she'd* go to the doctor sometimes, instead o' chewing Turkey rhubarb whenever there's anything the matter with her,' said Mrs Tulliver, who naturally saw the wide subject of medicine chiefly in relation to Mrs Glegg.

'It's dreadful to think on,' said aunt Pullet, raising her hands and letting them fall again, 'people playing with their own insides in that way! And it's flying i' the face o' Providence; for what are the doctors

for, if we aren't to call 'em in? And when folks have got the money to pay for a doctor, it isn't respectable, as I've told Jane many a time. I'm ashamed of acquaintance knowing it.'

'Well, *we've* no call to be ashamed,' said Mr Pullet, 'for Doctor Turnbull hasn't got such another patient as you i' this parish, now old Mrs Sutton's gone.'

'Pullet keeps all my physic-bottles, did you know, Bessy?' said Mrs Pullet. 'He won't have one sold. He says it's nothing but right folks should see 'em when I'm gone. They fill two o' the long store-room shelves a'ready; but,' she added, beginning to cry a little, 'it's well if they ever fill three. I may go before I've made up the dozen o' these last sizes. The pill-boxes are in the closet in my room, - you'll remember that, sister, - but there's nothing to show for the boluses, if it isn't the bills.'

'Don't talk o' your going, sister,' said Mrs Tulliver; 'I should have nobody to stand between me and sister Glegg if you was gone. And there's nobody but you can get her to make it up with Mr Tulliver, for sister Deane's never o' my side, and if she was, it's not to be looked for as she can speak like them as have got an independent fortin.'

'Well, your husband *is* awk'ard, you know, Bessy,' said Mrs Pullet, good-naturedly ready to use her deep depression on her sister's account as well as her own. 'He's never behaved quite so pretty to our family as he should do, and the children take after him, - the boy's very mischievous, and runs away from his aunts and uncles, and the gell's rude and brown. It's your bad luck, and I'm sorry for you, Bessy; for you was allays my favorite sister, and we allays liked the same patterns.'

'I know Tulliver's hasty, and says odd things,' said Mrs Tulliver, wiping away one small tear from the corner of her eye; 'but I'm sure he's never been the man, since he married me, to object to my making the friends o' my side o' the family welcome to the house.'

'I don't want to make the worst of you, Bessy,' said Mrs Pullet, compassionately, 'for I doubt you'll have trouble enough without that; and your husband's got that poor sister and her children hanging on him, - and so given to lawing, they say. I doubt he'll leave you poorly off when he dies. Not as I'd have it said out o' the family.'

This view of her position was naturally far from cheering to Mrs Tulliver. Her imagination was not easily acted on, but she could not help thinking that her case was a hard one, since it appeared that other people thought it hard.

'I'm sure, sister, I can't help myself,' she said, urged by the fear lest her anticipated misfortunes might be held retributive, to take comprehensive review of her past conduct. 'There's no woman strives more for her children; and I'm sure at scouring-time this Lady-day as I've had all the bedhangings taken down I did as much as the two gells put together; and there's the last elder-flower wine I've made - beautiful! I allays offer it along with the sherry, though sister Glegg will have it I'm so extravagant; and as for liking to have my clothes tidy, and not go a fright about the house, there's nobody in the parish can say anything against me in respect o' backbiting and making mischief, for I don't wish anybody any harm; and nobody loses by sending me a porkpie, for my pies are fit to show with the best o' my neighbors'; and the linen's so in order as if I was to die to-morrow I shouldn't be ashamed. A woman can do no more nor she can.'

'But it's all o' no use, you know, Bessy,' said Mrs Pullet, holding her head on one side, and fixing her eyes pathetically on her sister, 'if your husband makes away with his money. Not but what if you was sold up, and other folks bought your furniture, it's a comfort to think as you've kept it well rubbed. And there's the linen, with your maiden mark on, might go all over the country. It 'ud be a sad pity for our family.' Mrs Pullet shook her head slowly.

'But what can I do, sister?' said Mrs Tulliver. 'Mr Tulliver's not a man to be dictated to, - not if I was to go to the parson and get by heart what I should tell my husband for the best. And I'm sure I don't pretend to know anything about putting out money and all that. I could never see into men's business as sister Glegg does.'

'Well, you're like me in that, Bessy,' said Mrs Pullet; 'and I think it 'ud be a deal more becoming o' Jane if she'd have that pier-glass rubbed oftener, - there was ever so many spots on it last week, - instead o' dictating to folks as have more comings in than she ever had, and telling 'em what they're to do with their money. But Jane and me were allays contrairy; she *would* have striped things, and I like spots. You like a spot too, Bessy; we allays hung together i' that.'

'Yes, Sophy,' said Mrs Tulliver, 'I remember our having a blue ground with a white spot both alike, - I've got a bit in a bed-quilt now; and if you would but go and see sister Glegg, and persuade her to make it up with Tulliver, I should take it very kind of you. You was allays a good sister to me.'

'But the right thing 'ud be for Tulliver to go and make it up with her himself, and say he was sorry for speaking so rash. If he's borrowed money of her, he shouldn't be above that,' said Mrs Pullet, whose partiality did not blind her to principles; she did not forget what was due to people of independent fortune.

'It's no use talking o' that,' said poor Mrs Tulliver, almost peevishly. 'If I was to go down on my bare knees on the gravel to Tulliver, he'd never humble himself.'

'Well, you can't expect me to persuade *Jane* to beg pardon,' said Mrs Pullet. 'Her temper's beyond everything; it's well if it doesn't carry her off her mind, though there never *was* any of our family went to a madhouse.'

'I'm not thinking of her begging pardon,' said Mrs Tulliver. 'But if she'd just take no notice, and not call her money in; as it's not so much for one sister to ask of another; time 'ud mend things, and Tulliver 'ud forget all about it, and they'd be friends again.'

Mrs Tulliver, you perceive, was not aware of her husband's irrevocable determination to pay in the five hundred pounds; at least such a determination exceeded her powers of belief.

'Well, Bessy,' said Mrs Pullet, mournfully, 'I don't want to help you on to ruin. I won't be behindhand i' doing you a good turn, if it is to be done. And I don't like it said among acquaintance as we've got quarrels in the family. I shall tell Jane that; and I don't mind driving to Jane's tomorrow, if Pullet doesn't mind. What do you say, Mr Pullet?'

'I've no objections,' said Mr Pullet, who was perfectly contented with any course the quarrel might take, so that Mr Tulliver did not apply to *him* for money. Mr Pullet was nervous about his investments, and did not see how a man could have any security for his money unless he turned it into land.

After a little further discussion as to whether it would not be better for Mrs Tulliver to accompany them on a visit to sister Glegg, Mrs Pullet, observing that it was tea-time, turned to reach from a drawer a delicate damask napkin, which she pinned before her in the fashion of an apron. The door did, in fact, soon open, but instead of the tea-tray, Sally introduced an object so startling that both Mrs Pullet and Mrs Tulliver gave a scream, causing uncle Pullet to swallow his lozenge - for the fifth time in his life, as he afterward noted.