

reached Beaminster of scrapes and scandals in which the young Brands figured; it was said that Wyvis was a particularly black sheep, and that he did his best to corrupt his younger brother Cuthbert. The news that he was coming back to Brand Hall was not received with enthusiasm by those who heard it.

Wyvis' own story had been a sad one—perhaps more sad than scandalous; but it was a story that the Beaminster people were never to hear aright. Few knew it, and most of those who knew it had agreed to keep it secret. That his wife and child were living, many persons in Paris were aware; that they had separated was also known, but the reason of that separation was to most persons a secret. And Wyvis, who had a great dislike to chatterers, made up his mind when he came to Beaminster that he would tell to nobody the history of the past few years. Had it not been for his mother's sad face, he fancied that he could have put it out of his mind altogether. He half resented the pertinacity with which she seemed to brood upon it. The fact that she had forwarded— had almost insisted upon—the unfortunate marriage, weighed heavily upon her mind. There had been a point at which Wyvis would have given it up. But his mother had espoused the side of the girl, persuaded the young man to fulfill his promises to her— and repented it ever since. Mrs. Wyvis Brand had developed an uncontrollable love for strong drink, as well as a temper that made her at times more like a mad woman than an ordinary human being; and when she one day disappeared from her husband's home, carrying his child with her, and announcing in a subsequent letter that she did not mean to return, it could hardly be wondered at if Wyvis drew a long breath of relief, and hoped that she never would.

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## CHAPTER VL.

### JANETTA AT HOME.

When Lady Caroline drove away from Gwynne Street, Janetta was left by the tumble-down iron gate with her father, in whose hand she had laid both her own. He looked at her interrogatively, smiled a little and said—"Well, my dear?" with a softening of his whole face which made him positively beautiful in Janetta's eyes.

"Dear, dearest father!" said the girl, with an irrepressible little sob. "I am so glad to see you again!"

"Come in, my dear," said Mr. Colwyn, who was not an emotional man, although a sympathetic one. "We have been expecting you all day. We did not think that they would keep you so long at the Court. "