

"I dread your grandson, and tremble at the idea of ever meeting him," was Margaret's shuddering answer.

"Yes, I regret not having caused you to meet before," complacently observed Mrs. Brand. "You will soon overcome these childish tremors. Would you not like to be the mistress of Castle Brand, and the owner of Seven-Oak Waaste, my proud Margaret?"

"No, madam," breathed Margaret, fervently; "never as Captain Brand's wife."

"Ah—hem! We shall see, we shall see," quoth the lady, serenely, and dropped the subject.

Soon after that she was smitten with her death sickness, and at the last she called her poor Margaret to her, and with plaintive affection boasted to her of what she had done for her.

"You shall never be homeless again, sweet soul," murmured she, with glistening eyes. "I have willed this castle to you if St. Udo refuses your hand."

"Madam, for Heaven's sake revoke that will!" prayed Margaret, vehemently. "Do not bequeath such misery to him and to me!"

"Pooh—rubbish! He will deserve to lose all if he refuses the woman I choose for his wife," cried the autocratic dame.

"I thank Heaven that I have no beauty with which to buy his love!" cried Margaret, with proudly flashing eyes. "He will not sue for me. But, madam, you must revoke your will. I cannot live to injure your grandson so deeply."

"You are a foolish girl. I tell you, Margaret," in rising wrath, "that I will not have my estate, the richest in all Surrey, squandered away in gambling, horse-racing, and worse extravagance by St. Udo. I had much rather give it all to you than to his mad associates. He has spent his patrimony, and his mother's fortune went soon after her death. He has only Seven-Oak Waaste to stand between him and penury. So will he not, think you, mend his life, and become a man worthy of Margaret Walsingham, if it was only to come into possession of his own inheritance? Tears, my darling? Come, you give my love a poor return."

"Oh, madam—oh, madam!" sobbed Margaret, "blot my name out of your will, if you value my happiness."

Mrs. Brand watched her in bitter disappointment, then turned her face away and wept a few angry tears.

"Send for St. Udo," said she, curtly. "If he refuses your hand before my face, I shall change the will, but not unless he does so."

Margaret telegraphed to London for Cap-

tain Brand, telling him of his grandmother's sudden illness and her desire to see him.

Captain Brand wrote a polite and indifferent reply to Margaret Walsingham, expressing regrets, sympathy, and excuses, and promising to run down to Surrey some day next week.

Margaret wrote an entreating note, setting forth the urgency of the case and the certainty that Mrs. Brand was dying; and Captain Brand telegraphed a dry, "Very well, I will be at Regis to-night."

And all day long the dying woman sank lower, and forgot ere long the things of earth, and hour after hour went past, bringing only wilder grief and anxiety to the hapless Margaret.

So she was still tied to the wehr-wolf of her loathing fancy, and until St. Udo Brand chose to come to his grandmother that tie was indissoluble.

Margaret Walsingham was aroused from her hopeless meditations by the appearance of Symonds driving Mr. Davenport, Mrs. Brand's lawyer, into the court-yard, and she descended swiftly to meet him in the library.

Mr. Davenport entered—a tall, thin, wiry man, with beetling brows and irascible eyes—and cautiously shut the door.

"Is Mrs. Brand conscious yet?" he asked.

"She is asleep," said Margaret. "We fear that she will not live to see the heir. Now, Mr. Davenport, I have asked you to come here that when Captain Brand arrives you may be upon the ground to change the will legally. Dr. Gay hopes that she may awake to consciousness for a few minutes before death. Wait here, if you please, until you are summoned."

Without another word she left the library, followed to the door by the lawyer's keen eyes, and ascended to the death-chamber.

Dr. Gay sat by the dying woman, wiping the death-dews from her brow; her eyes were open and were eagerly fixed upon the door. Margaret entered, they flickered up into a transient brightness, her cold lips faintly smiled.

"You know me, do you not?" murmured Margaret, kneeling beside her and laying her cheek fondly on the pillow beside her friend's.

The cold lips framed an eager "Yes," the groping hand sought hers and pressed it gratefully.

Margaret Walsingham's tears fell fast; she kissed the wan cheek of her dying patroness and smothered her white tresses back from her clammy brow.

"God be with you, my good Margaret!" muttered the old lady, brokenly. "you have been a good friend to a lonely woman. You shall be rewarded when I am gone."