

"It is nobody else, sir," answered the mother, bursting into tears. "She had just been married to young Mr. Lyvett."

The flush that had suddenly heated the colonel's face turned cold again. He sat down, and passed his handkerchief across it.

"I don't know that I understand," he said. "I heard—certainly—there was some young person left for execution. The—crime was the killing of a child, was it not?"

"Yes, sir. A little boy that would have been, it is said, two years old come September. Sophiar says you can save her, sir," replied Mrs. May, her voice dropping to somewhat of a confidential tone; which tone would, of itself alone, have roused the colonel's ire.

"She says that you are related to some great man, an officer of state, I think she called him, who can pardon or hang criminals, according to his will; and she bade me say, sir, that you must ask for her pardon from him, and get it."

"I cannot do it," returned Colonel Devereux, aghast. "The—the person you allude to would not listen to me. I—I don't know any person: I don't know what you mean," he added, speaking his contradictory words with hesitation.

"Oh, sir, she says you can. I believe, from your own manner, that you can: and may you find mercy yourself in your dying hour, as you now—if it be in your power—show mercy for my poor condemned child!"

"Don't introduce any of that trash," was the interruption, for any allusions that bore reverence were never acceptable to Colonel Devereux; and just now he was feeling frightfully annoyed. "It will not weigh with me; quite the contrary. It is impossible that I can attempt to save her."

His tone of irritation, his apparent refusal, told harshly on Mrs. May, and she could have found, in her heart, to strike him as he sat. As to himself, his temper was always bad, and he had never been driven into such a corner as this.

"I *can't* do it," repeated Colonel Devereux. And he believed that he could not.

"Then, sir, am I to go back to the prison to-morrow, to that unfortunate girl, who is beside herself with hope and excitement, and tell her that you refuse to help her? That will be a bad finish to my day's work. Sir, I have stood