

"Then you know?" His voice was stirred by deep emotion, yet very quiet. "That was what I have feared."

"You know?"

"Yes."

"You knew before you—"

"Yes."

"Oh, Steven, that was what I have feared."

He smiled as if her words had not been serious, and then he was gone; and she had only to sit and stroke her sister's hair and whisper loving unanswered words, in the solemn loneliness of the hill-side.

Presently the little child, white and sick with terror, crept to her side and tried to put one little bony hand between the fingers that clasped Ella's.

"I said I saw 'im," she whispered, "and I did saw 'im, didn't I?"

Derry answered only by a kind touch upon the thin fingers, for though she tried, she could not smile; and then strickenly she bent again to kiss the face against her breast. Though she thought it a long hour, it was in reality not many minutes before two men came running up with a light hurdle and a mattress. They arranged the carriage-rug upon it, then Steven himself laid their burden there, and Derry, unstrapping Ella's light water-proof from the carriage, wrapped it round her and stood with the unresponding hand in hers, ready to walk beside her sister home.

"No! Let the men go alone, and ever so slowly, will you?" entreated Steven. "It will be far better that you should be at home first, for there is much that you can do before they come. I luckily found Corfe's groom, and I can trust him to take you, if you will let him drive the ponies home. I have sent for Mrs. Martin's doctor to go at once to the Pines. Oh, my—if I might but help you myself!"

"You have," she answered, simply. "Do not look so sad, Steven. Ella often has fainted; and no harm was done to the horses, or the child, or me, or anything. Steven" (looking again at the unsuitable dress), "was it you in Leppard's cottage?"

"Yes; I only recognized you just in time to get out of sight."

"I spoke of you to the old man as his son. Oh, Steven, you surely—"

"Have not been there ever since? Oh, no. I only came down here to-day about my things from home, and because, like a fool, I longed for one glimpse of you."

"It was Leppard's son who told us of—seeing you in the sea."

"It was Leppard's son who brought his boat and a suit of his own clothes and took me up and off. I arranged it all the day before. I knew I could trust him, for he is a faithful fellow. Once, just at first I was tempted to really do what I seemed to have done, but I thank God I had not fallen quite so low as that. I lived"—she did not seem to know, but she remembered afterward how tightly her hand was held in his while he spoke—"and if my whole life had been a misery to me, I have to-day been recompensed."

"Even yet," said Derry, her lovely desolate eyes still on his, "I have never thanked you."

"Spare me that. Oliver can thank me," he whispered, his harsh tone showing what the news of her engagement had been to him. "Do you remember"—he was making a brave attempt to speak lightly, seeing the pain in her face—"how little you appreciated the beautiful hue of my green coat on your first morning at Harrack's? I positively thought then that I would rather appear ignominiously attired before almost anybody than you, yet here you see me!"

"Is it always to be trifling between you and me?" she asked, in passionate quietness. "Where shall you be? When shall you—"

"Never! Nowhere!" he answered, rapidly. "I am going out of your life now, not to trouble it again. Is not it strange that only this very afternoon—when now I know that your wheels must have been close behind me—I was thinking what a short time it is, after all?"

"Why strange?" she asked, wistfully, "that it should be just then you thought of death? I often do."

"Oh, I don't know" (avoiding a glance at the quiescent form borne from them), "any more than I know why you should, as you say you do, often think of death, in your perfect health, and with your