

"The doctor would be no use," she answered—"She's just fairly worn out and wants rest. Her little room is ready,—I've kept it aired, and the bed made warm and cosy ever since she went away—lest she should ever come back sudden like . . . could you carry her up, d'ye think? She'll be better in her bed—and she would come to herself quicker."

Gently and with infinite tenderness he lifted the girl as though she were a baby and carried her lightly up the broad oak staircase, Priscilla leading the way—and soon they brought her into her own room, unchanged since she had occupied it, and kept by Priscilla's loving and half superstitious care ready for her return at any moment. Laying her down on her little bed, Robin left her, though hardly able to tear himself away, and going downstairs again he flung himself into a chair and wept like a child for the ruin and wreck of the fair young life which might have been the joy and sunshine of his days!

"Amadis de Jocelyn!" he muttered—"A curse on him! Why should the founder of this house bring evil on us?—Rising up like a ghost to overshadow us and spoil our happiness?—Let the house perish and all its traditions if it must be so, rather than that she should suffer!—for she is innocent!"

Yes—she was quite innocent,—the little "base-born" intruder on the unbroken line and history of the Jocelyns!—and yet—it was with a kind of horror that the memory of that unbroken line and history recurred to him. Was there—could there be anything real in the long prevalent idea that if the direct line of the Jocelyns were broken, the peace and prosperity so long attendant on the old farm would be at an end? He put the thought away with a sense of anger.