

And she was equally cheerful in the station ; for she kept saying to herself, '*Keep up now, keep up. It is only five minutes now. And, oh! if he were to see me cry—the least bit—I should die of shame.*'

'*Sylvia,*' said he, when they happened to be alone for a moment, 'I suppose I may write to you?'

'Yes,' said she, timidly.

'How often?'

'I—I don't know,' said she, looking down.

'Would it bother you if you had a letter every morning?'

'Oh,' she said, 'you could never spare me time to write to me so often as that. I know how busy you must be. You must not let me interfere in any way, now or at any time, with your real work. You must promise that to me.'

'I will promise this to you,' said he, taking her hand to bid her good-by, 'that my relations with you shall never interfere with my duties toward the honourable and independent electors of Ballinascroon. Will that do?'

The train came up. She dared not raise her eyes to his face as she shook hands with him. Her heart was beating hurriedly.

She conquered, nevertheless. There were several people about the station who knew Lord Willowby's daughter ; and as she was rather a distinguished person in that neighbourhood, and as she was pretty and prettily dressed, she attracted a good deal of notice. But what did they see? Only Lady Sylvia bidding good-by to her papa and to a gentleman who had doubtless been his guest ; and there was nothing but a bright and friendly smile in her face as she looked after that particular carriage in the receding train.

But there was no smile at all in her face as she was being driven back through the still and wooded country to the empty Hall. The large, tender, dark gray eyes were full of trouble and anxious memories ; her heart was heavy within her. It was her first sorrow ; and there was something new, alarming, awful about it. This sense of loneliness—of being left—of having her heart yearning after something that had gone away—was a new experience altogether, and it brought with it strange tremors of unrest and unreasoning anxiety.

She had often read in books that the best

cure for care was hard work ; and as soon as she got back to the Hall she set busily about the fulfilment of her daily duties. She found, however, but little relief. The calm of mind and of occupation had fled from her. She was agitated by all manner of thoughts, fancies, surmises, that would not let her be in peace.

That letter of the next morning, for example, she would have to answer it. But how? She went to her own little sitting-room and securely locked the door, and sat down to her desk. She stared at the blank paper for several minutes before she dared to place anything on it ; and it was with a trembling hand that she traced out the words, '*Dear Mr. Balfour.*' Then she pondered for a long time on what she should say to him—a difficult matter to decide, seeing she had not as yet received the letter which she wished to answer. She wrote, '*My dear Mr. Balfour.*' and looked at that. Then she wrote, with her hand trembling more than ever, '*Dear H—,*' but she got no further than that, for some flush of color mounted to her face, and she suddenly resolved to go and see the head gardener about the new geraniums. Before leaving the room, however, she tore up the sheet of paper into very small pieces.

Now the head gardener was a soured and disappointed man. The whole place, he considered, was starved ; such flowers as he had, nobody came to see ; while Lord Willowby had an amazingly accurate notion of the amount which the sale of the fruit of each year ought to bring. He was curt of speech, and resented interference. On this occasion, moreover, he was in an ill humor. But to his intense surprise his young mistress was not to be beaten off by his short answers. Was her ladyship in an ill humor too? Anyhow, she very quickly brought him to his senses ; and one good issue of that day's worry was that old Blake was a deal more civil to Lady Sylvia ever after.

'You know, Blake,' said she, firmly, 'you Yorkshire people are said to be a little too sharp with your tongue sometimes.'

'I do not know, my lady,' said the old man, with great exasperation, 'why the people will go on saying I am from Yorkshire. If I have lived in a stable, I am not a hoarse. I am sure I have told your ladyship I was boarn in Dumfries.'

'Indeed you have, Blake,' said Lady