

CHAPTER XLII

BODY AND SOUL

SHE was unconscious when she was lifted on to the stretcher by the ambulance men, but James Cottar was able to give the necessary information as to her identity and address ; and it was not long before she was lying upon her own bed in her rooms at Westminster. Robin had gone to Trafalgar Square in search of her, and there, from the silenced and pacified crowd, he had heard the news which had brought him back breathless to the house a few moments after she had been carried upstairs. A doctor was speedily sent for and a rapid operation was performed ; but there was not a great deal of hope. The bullet had penetrated deep into her body, and in its transit, so the doctor said, had probably injured vital organs ; and he considered it doubtful even whether she would recover consciousness before the end.

Robin's brain was numbed by the shock. It seemed impossible that she who a few hours ago was so full of the glory of youth should now be lying limp and almost inanimate. The transmutation from pulsating life to this cessation of being was too sudden to be realized ; and for hours he sat with his eyes fixed upon her face, his mind almost devoid of thought. He was only conscious of her childlike beauty. Her pale face seemed to be so untouched by the turmoil of life ; her hair, tumbled upon the pillow, was so like that of a sleeping child ; her