

ing intelligence, and of the two ladies who heard it, Mrs. Ross, doubtless, only took into consciousness, after this, a stray word here and there, such as 'horse,' or 'fainted away;' while Beatrice, on the other hand, clearly comprehending the full sense of the intelligence, very soon had fast hold of both her friend's hands and was saying rapidly, yet with excellent composure:

'Don't be so alarmed until you know just what it is. Perhaps, after all, the accident may not prove a serious one.'

Nearly fainting with fright, Mrs. Ross presently stood at her son's side, where they had laid him on a lounge, in one of the lower rooms. Reginald's eyes were closed and he was extremely pale; but he soon gave signs of not having swooned, opening his eyes for a moment and pointing with a suppressed groan toward his right leg. The real truth was that excessive pain in the ankle of this limb had temporarily nullified all the man's nervous energy. As soon as the locality of his injury had been discovered, the ankle was bared, and already its bluish swollen look gave serious import of future trouble. Meanwhile Beatrice had despatched one servant for a doctor, and learned from the head-gardener, Haslitt, who was an eye-witness of the accident, just how appallingly narrow an escape Reginald had sustained. Haslitt was himself near one of the main lawn-gates at the moment that a bulky-looking peddler's waggon was about to enter it. At the same moment his master appeared near the gate, riding briskly. Reginald's horse, terrified by the uncouth vehicle, reared unmanageably once, and his rider, as though irritated by such an unforeseen procedure, then promptly spurred him forward. But rearing a second time, the horse lost his balance and fell backward. 'I don't know what ever saved Mr. Reginald from being crushed,' Haslitt proceeded, 'when that thing happened. The fence hid him, Miss, an' I says to myself, "he's killed," says I, "sure." But when I got through the gate, there was the horse,

scamperin' like mad down the road, and Mr. Reginald lyin' white as a sheet, with his right leg a-doubled up straight under him. I knew quick enough, Miss, he'd somehow got clear o' the horse, but I'm afraid o' my life his ankle's broke, and very bad broke, too.'

Medical authority, however, when it arrived soon afterward, gave scientific disproof of Haslitt's theory. Reginald was suffering from a violent and rather complicated sprain of the right ankle, but beyond the unavoidable discomforts of tedious recovery he had no reason for future anxiety. During all the period between her first appearance at the sufferer's side and the subsequent arrival of the doctor, an interval, which intensified sensation on at least her own and Mrs. Ross's part, must have made twice its actual length. Beatrice's self-possession, tranquillity, and knowledge of soothative if not curative applications, brought to bear upon the whole group surrounding poor agonized Reginald something like the commandant, distributive capability which is to be found in judicious generalship. Once or twice, even amid the excitement preceding the doctor's appearance, Mrs. Ross felt a dreary pang of realization break through her anxiety, as she observed Beatrice's unruffled presence of mind. Admirable though it might be under the given circumstances, a demeanour so collected spoke ill for her own newly-roused hopes. For where, in this courageous benignity, was there one gleam of anything like actual passion.

Those same hopes, however, were fed with a fresh force during the after days of Reginald's illness. Never was a tenderer, more considerate or more accomplished nurse than Beatrice now proved herself. A vigorous young fellow of active temperament is not always dowered with the sort of endurance which makes him murmurless under a martyrdom like this of Reginald's; but it is certain that the effect of Beatrice's continual attend-