

Mrs. Brookes' faith. Indeed, she was quite angry with Stella for venturing to doubt it.

"They could do no less than write, polite and civil as they 'ave always bin. It is /only doo to me. Caryl Clive will know I'm of a /anxious turn o' mind."

And after the last postal delivery had brought no line her indignation actually asserted itself.

"I didn't think it of the Countess Helen!" she said.

When, however, Sunday and Monday came, and still no news arrived, anger gave place to an undefined feeling of fear.

"Suppose that 'e shouldn't be back in time to do my business!" she exclaimed. Not indeed, that she had the remotest notion of what this particular business might consist, Caryl's crafty directions and instructions to her, before she had actually thrown upo'a him the onus of carrying them out, having entirely confused her.

"Mr. Pyder, will you 'ave the kindness to /ask at the station whether the five-thirty on Saturday met with /any delay or /accident?"

"We should have seen an account of that in the papers, mother," Stella reminded her. "Oh, I daresay there'll be a note in the morning. They are sure to be very busy."

It soothed her for the moment to listen to the excuse. But the calm did not last for long; and when Tuesday dawned without bringing either intelligence or the much-desired presence of the financier himself, her condition grew truly pitiable. She would allow no one to look into her affairs, no lawyer to be called in and entrusted with the task which Caryl had undertaken, no word of advice to be offered. She simply walked from room to room and window to window, wringing her hands, and watching for the man who never came. Who never would come, as Stella and Guy began to believe.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CRISIS.



MEANWHILE, at Thetfield Vicarage, life pursued its ordinary course without any of the excitements that were agitating the small world of Kingston Villa. One great interest of late had been that of Tom Beresford's recovery, and the prospect of his consequent speedy dismissal from the hospital, where, however, Mary had already several times visited him. She had taken pains to give him such accounts of the night-school and Bible-class, as to interest him in the subjects which she was seeking to instil into the minds of his "mates," without, on her part, seeming to preach to him.

It was greatly to Mrs. Jaxon's joy that the matter of Baptism had been by no means allowed to fall to the ground,

after the Bible-class at which it had been talked of and discussed. Upon the next evening, at the night-school, half-a-dozen lads, including Stacey and Riley, waited behind to give their names as being desirous of further instruction. Though, with true Yorkshire caution, their spokesman, Furniss, told her, "Maybe oos wain't be done, after arl. But oos'd loike t' know, if so be as yow wull tell oos." Right gladly did Mary undertake the task.