

with wide-staring eyes, moves forward. In the door-way she lingers.

The light in burning a little more brightly than when she looked in last, a few small keys lie on the carpet, the drawers of the Japanese cabinet stand open—this she takes in at the first glance. Then slowly and reluctantly her eyes turn to the bed. No blood-stained sight of horror meets her. Mrs. Windsor lies there, her face calm and still, her breathing deep and heavy, unhurt and asleep.

The revulsion of feeling is so great, so unutterable, that Reine drops into the nearest chair, sick and faint. The money is gone, but no murder has been done. Her head falls heavily against the chairback, but she rallies almost directly, sits up, and now for the first time becomes conscious of something that has hitherto escaped her. A curious smell fills the room—a faint, sweet, fetid penetrating odour. She has never inhaled it before; and now, too, she sees a sponge lying on the breast of the sleeping woman. What a curious thing to be there.

She goes over to the bed, lifts the sponge, and holds it to her face. Faugh! the smell is almost intolerable—this sponge has been impregnated with it. Then she knows—she has never inhaled it before, but she knows—it is chloroform that fills the room.

Fully aroused now, Reine can act. Her first act is to throw the window open and let in a rush of fresh pure air; her next to put the sponge and scattered keys in her pocket. In a very few minutes the atmosphere is again endurable, and the oppression that seemed to overpower Mrs. Windsor's slumber is gone. There is no need to linger longer. She closes the window, moves the sleeper gently into an easier position; then she leaves the chamber and goes back to her own.

She does not return to bed; she sinks down on her knees by the bedside, agony in the upturned face, agony beyond all telling in the desolate heart. She has but one cry, and it ascends strong enough in its anguish to pierce heaven.

"Have mercy on him! Heaven, have mercy on him!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ANOTHER DAY.

MR. LONGWORTH returns to Baymouth very early in the afternoon of the day following that stormy October night. The storm has not interfered with his journey. He has slept all night in a palace car, lulled by the rocking motion and the beating of the rain on the glass. He hastens to his boarding-house at once, finds himself in time for luncheon, and also for the dish of gossip and detraction daily served up with that midday refectation.

"Miss Marie Landelle is away with the Dexters, mother and son—has spent a week with them in Boston, and is cruising about now upon the high seas in her namesake, the Marie. A pleasant night they must have had, of it too. It is to be hoped Mr. Frank has secured a competent skipper and pilot and crew. His affair may be looked upon as settled. Lucky young dog, Mr. Frank, prospective possessor of a princely fortune and a peerless wife."

This says Mr. Beckwith, going into the edibles with the energy of a constitutionally hungry man.

"Miss Harriott has returned, Mr. Longworth will be rejoiced to hear," says Mrs. Beckwith.

"Monsieur Leonce Durand has packed his belongings, and departs to-day," says Mrs. Sheldon, languidly regretful; "and they all expect to miss him so much."

"And what is odd about it," chimes in mamma Longworth, sharply, "is, that Mr. Durand has not been in all night, his bed has not been slept in, and nobody seems to know what has become of him."

All this Mr. Longworth listens to in cold, unsympathetic silence. Durand's going is nothing to him—nothing whatever. With those people he has done for ever. A stern, intense anger against Reine fills him—intense scorn for himself mingles with it. How easy a dupe she has found him. He, calling himself a man of the world, knowing that guilt can look at you with open and fearless face, while innocence shrinks and shivers, had yet taken this girl into his heart almost at sight, and fallen in love with those bonnie brown eyes, and that frank and fearless smile.