

NURSE. What is the matter ? .

CHAR. Quick, the other side. I can scarcely support her.

NURSE. Poor old soul ! This is what the doctor feared. I'm afraid 'tis all over with her. (*Exeunt Nurse and Charlotte with Miss Fairfax. The will falls to the floor. Pause. Enter Fanny.*)

FAN. Gone ! They had a nice little tête-a-tête here, and goodness knows what stories that spiteful Charlotte told about me. What does it matter, anyhow ? She'll be gone soon, and we can get on the good side of Aunt. (*Picks up paper.*) What is this ? Signed Eleanor Fairfax. Could it be—Gracious ! 'Tis a will, and dated yesterday. (*Reading.*) "To my niece, Charlotte Irwin, I will and bequeath, my entire fortune of a quarter of a million." She has made Charlotte her heir. Can it be true ! June and I to be left penniless ? We can never undo this ! Oh, why were we such fools ? Not a cent ! If she were to die now, where could we go ? We would have to be dependent on Charlotte. Never ! I would rather starve ! Oh, if I had only suspected this, how differently I would have acted.

(*Enter Katie.*)

KATIE. Oh, Fanny, Fanny ! Something terrible has happened !

FAN. (*aside*). Can she mean the will ?

KATIE. Your Aunt,—poor child ! She took a bad turn, and—Oh, how can I tell you ?

FAN. What ? what ?

KATIE. She is dead.

FAN. Dead ! Great Heavens !

KATIE. We thought she was only in a faint, but the nurse said 'twas all over, and no use to go for the doctor. Oh, I must go and bring Mr. Parker over right away.

(*Exit Katie.*)

FAN. Our Aunt dead ! I wonder if 'tis really so ! I don't dare to go into the room—'tis too horrible. What will June say ? Dead ! But I have thought of this often lately —I shouldn't be so surprised (*shudders ; then, suddenly*) Ah,