

cella, struggling with her sobs, and succeeding at last in composing herself.

"She was prepared for it. Charlie told her when he saw her after you left this afternoon that she must expect it."

There was a pause.

"I shall soon hear, I suppose," said Marcella, in a hardening voice, her hands round her knees, "what Mr. Wharton is doing for the defence. He will appear before the magistrates, I suppose."

"Yes; but Charlie thinks the defence will be mainly reserved. Only a little more than a fortnight to the assizes! The time is so short. But now this man has turned informer, they say the case is quite straightforward. With all the other evidence the police have there will be no difficulty in trying them all. Marcella!"

"Yes."

Had there been light enough to show it, Mary's face would have revealed her timidity.

"Marcella, Charlie asked me to give you a message. He begs you not to — not to make Mrs. Hurd hope too much. He himself believes there is no hope, and it is not kind."

"Are you and he like all the rest," cried Marcella, her passion breaking out again, "only eager to have blood for blood?"

Mary waited an instant.

"It has almost broken Charlie's heart," she said at last; "but he thinks it was murder, and that Hurd will pay the penalty; nay, more" — she spoke with a kind of religious awe in her gentle voice — "that he