

THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN SHUTTERS

plaistering my withored breist. But I never let onybody ken," she added with pride; "na-a-a; I never let onybody ken. When your faither nipped me wi' his tongue, it nipped me wi' its pain, and, woman, it consoled me. 'Aye, aye,' I used to think; 'jibe awa, jibe awa; but I hae a freend in my breist that'll end it some day.' I likit to keep it to mysell. When it bit me it seemed to whisper I had a freend that nane o' them kenned o'—a freend that would deliver me! The mair he badgered me, the closer I hugged it; and when my ho'rt was br'akin I enjoyed the pain o't."

"Oh, my poor, poor mother!" cried Janet with a bursting sob, her eyes raining hot tears. Her very body seemed to feel compassion; it quivered and crept near, as though it would brood over her mother and protect her. She raised the poor hand and kissed it, and fondled it between her own.

But her mother had forgotten the world in one of her wild lapses, and was staring fixedly.

"I'll no lang be a burden to onybody," she said to herself. "It should sune be wearing to a heid now. But I thought of something the day John gaed away. Aye, I thought of something," she said vaguely. "Janet, what was it I was thinking of?"

"I dinna ken," whispered Janet.

"I was thinking of something!" her mother mused. Her voice all through was a far-off voice, remote from understanding. "Yes, I remember. Ye're young, Jenny, and you learned the dressmaking—do ye think ye could sew, or something, to keep a bit garret owre my heid till I dee? Aye, it was that I was thinking of—though it doesna matter much now.—Eh, Jenny? I'll