

years, Captain Byrne," answered the lawyer, quietly, "and I am no stranger to her capabilities."

While they were thus quietly discussing the extraordinary turn in the affairs of Ballymore, Lady Lyndon, left alone, gave way for a moment to the terrible reaction bound to follow upon such an exciting hour. The moment the door closed upon her she sank into a chair breathing heavily. Her face lost its proud, defiant look, and expressed only the anguish and despair of her soul. If there was one being on earth she loved it was her son Tom. He was the very counterpart of herself, and the thought that he was now practically homeless and nameless seemed to burn like a hot iron into her soul. She had not failed to observe the terrible expression on his face as he hastened from the room, and though she knew that she would not be a welcome sight to him, she felt moved to know and to hear the worst. It was imperative, besides, that they should consult together without delay in order to decide upon their course of action. She rose at length, and, wiping the cold perspiration from her brow, proceeded to the dining-room, where she took from the sideboard a small glass of brandy, which brought the colour back to her pale cheeks, and infused a new courage into her heart. Then she went in search of her son.

In the lower rooms he was nowhere to be found; evidently he had not joined the shooting party, because she found his gun where he had dropped it. For a moment the fear struck her lest he had done some harm to himself, but she was able to dismiss it almost as quickly as it came. She knew her son well, and believed him to be too thoroughly a coward at heart to lay hands on himself. It occurred to her as