

The door opened, and the two women came in. Mrs. Gray looked white and exhausted. The Professor rang the bell and ordered a glass of wine. Stanerigg moved to his wife's side, and put his arm round her, laying aside the reserve that had bound him these thirty years.

'Oh, Lisbeth,' he said, and those who heard him never forgot the concentrated anguish in his tones: 'My wife!'

*My wife!* If he could have kept her, if his love could have saved her a single pang! It was all expressed in these four words.

The Professor bade them good-bye silently, and went his way more saddened than usual at the outset of his day's work. Neil Denham stood in the window looking beyond the budding trees of the garden down to the sunny Forth, and his eyes were wet.

Mary took the wine-glass from the servant's hand and held it to the lips of her friend, and gradually the faint colour stole back to her face.

'Sic a bother I am to a' body,' she said, smiling bravely. 'I suppose we'd better gang noo. D'ye no think, faither, we should gang straicht hame at one o'clock?'