

"Yes," said the doctor, driven to desperation by her sneering tone.

"'Tis well," she replied, with a mocking smile, "I knew you were too sensible a man to refuse. After all, 'tis but a moment's work, and all is over."

"Will you be good enough to give me the explanation now, madam?" said the doctor, almost shuddering at the cold, unfeeling tone in which she spoke.

"Certainly. You are aware, doctor, that when I married my late husband, Mr. Oranmore, he was a widower with one son, then three years old."

"I am aware of that fact, madam."

"Well, you also know that when this child, Alfred was five years of age, *my* son, Barry, was born."

"Yes, madam."

"Perhaps you think it unnecessary for me to go so far back, doctor, but I wish everything to be perfectly understood. Well, these two boys grew up together, were sent to school and college together, and treated in every way alike, *outwardly*; but, of course, when at home, Barry was treated best. Alfred Oranmore had all the pride of his English forefathers, and scorned to complain; but I could see, in his flashing eyes and curling lips, that every slight was noticed. Mr. Oranmore never interfered with me in my household arrangements, nor did his son ever complain to him; though, if he had, Mr. Oranmore had too much good sense to mention it to *me*."

The lady compressed her lips with stately dignity, and the doctor looked down with something as near a smile as his wrinkled lips could wear. *He* knew very well Mr. Oranmore would not have interfered; for never after his marriage had the poor man dared to call his soul his own. The lady, however, did not perceive the smile, and went on: