

"Love her—love her while your heart beats."

"God knows that I will."

There was a silence, then a sigh; then Malherb lowered John Lee's head.

"He's gone—a truer Malherb than many who bear the name. Let every honest man mourn him, for his life was a pure life and his end noble. He has saved our honour; he——"

The speaker broke off and stared where Grace was weeping in Cecil Stark's arms.

"What right have you——?" he asked.

"The right that man died for, sir. His love makes mine but pale, yet, for Grace's sake and for mine, he laid down his life. I would perish for him if I could bring him back to the living; but that cannot be. Therefore I will live to bless his name. I will strive to be worthy of his sacrifice."

"And you, daughter Grace?"

"I was stolen from you, my darling father; and I should have been stoien for evermore but for what has happened. I love Cecil and have loved him since I first saw him, so pale and weary from his struggle with the storm. You saved his life for me, father. And dear John died for us; his last gentle words——"

"I heard them as well as you," said Maurice Malherb slowly. "I understood them. Who could not understand them? There is a solemn obligation that attaches to the last wish of any good man. I am in his debt for ever. God forgive me, for I used him ill. Come hither, Stark. To-day the lightning of heaven would strike me if I spoke one harsh word, or brought one pang to any human spirit. The Almighty has blessed me; yet his ways are past our understanding. That you who are an American—yet—yet of English blood. And there are closer bonds even than those of country. How simple were the last words he spoke! Here you stand—you two. So be it. Take my girl's hand, Cecil Stark. And before Heaven, remember what that dead man, with his last breath, said to you—'Love her—love her while your heart beats.'"