

lenient to your son. I am obliged for the compliment, Doctor Gilruth."

He shook his head slightly, and she saw a kind of tremor about his mouth.

"Your pride equals mine, Mrs. Tom. One of us must give in. I ask you here, as by my dead boy, to forgive me. I have made the grand mistake of my life, and I have to suffer for it. Woman, do you think it is nothing to me to see him lying there dead? You think yours is a mighty grief. Let me tell you it is feeble compared to mine. I have never had an idol which has not been shivered before me; I have never built a temple for love or ambition which has not been cast down in ruins. There is a curse upon me and mine. The Almighty pursues me with His vengeance, and this is the last stroke. He is welcome to take my life too. It is valueless in my eyes."

Magdalen was awed by the fierceness of the passion, which shook the old man as the wind-storm shakes the wintry boughs. For the first time a strange, sweet touch of compassion relieved the gloom of her soul. He turned to her once more after a minute's painful silence, and he was conscious that her expression had changed.

"You will forgive me; I see it in your eyes. You have the true womanly eyes. They are softer than the smile of heaven. We will take the boy home and bury him beside his mother, and we can mourn him together. Ay, ay, poor lad. He is better off where he is to-day. We can mourn him together."