

## THE BARGAIN

ing under the summer stars, staring at the gathering crowd around that shapeless lump on the grass.

Plank passed them, walking beside an improvised stretcher, calm, almost smiling, as Sylvia sprang forward with a little sob of inquiry.

"There's the doctor, over there; that man is a doctor; *he* knows," repeated Plank with studied deliberation, looking down at Leila's deathly face. "He says it's all right; he says he'll get a candle, and that he can tell by the flame's effect on the pupils of the eyes what exactly is the matter. No," to Siward beside him, pressing forward through the crowd which eddied from the dead man to the stretcher; "no, there is not a bone broken. She is stunned, that's all; she fell in the shrubbery. We'll have an ambulance here pretty quick. Stephen," using his first name unconsciously, "won't you look out for Sylvia? I'm going back on the ambulance. If you'll find somebody to drive my machine, I wish you would take Sylvia back. No, I don't want you to drive, Stephen—if you don't mind. Get that machinist, please. I'm rattled, and I don't want you to drive."

Leila lay on the stretcher, her bloodless face upturned to the stars. Beyond, under a blanket, something else lay very still on the lawn.

Plank beckoned a policeman, and whispered to him.

Then, far away in the darkness, a distant clamour grew on the night air, nearer, nearer.

Plank, standing beside the stretcher, raised his head, listening to the ambulance arriving at full speed.