

She has no inclination to cry now. Her eyes sparkle, and her breast heaves.

"Is that gentleman—the doctor—here still?" she inquires.

"Yes, ma'am. Mr. Fellows, his name is. We've put him in the Blue-Room."

"Ask him to come here."

The young man—a surgeon from a neighboring village—soon makes his appearance, and to his hands Irene confides the charge of every thing connected with the last offices to be performed for her husband, which Mr. Fellows, being much impressed with her beauty and her grief, undertakes without any hesitation, and promises to act for her until the arrival of Oliver Ralston shall set him at liberty again. Upon which she rises and bows to him, and, without another glance toward that which bears so small resemblance to the gallant, fine old man who promised but last night to grow young again for her sake, leaves the room, and creeps away to the side of Tommy's cot, and remains there till the morning, rocking herself backward and forward, and wondering why God should have especially selected herself to suffer such repeated separations.

"First my dear father, and then mother, and now Philip! They all weary of me—they will not wait until I can accompany them. They are too anxious to get free—they forget I shall be left alone.—O Tommy, my darling, stay with me! Don't you go too. And yet, Heaven only knows how long I shall be permitted to keep you either."

She makes herself miserable with such thoughts until the day breaks. How strange to see it dawn, and remember, with a start, that for *him* time is no more! She rises chilled and stiff from her position with the daylight, and performs the duties of dressing mechanically; yet she will not quit the nursery, but sits there hour after hour with her hands crossed upon her lap, listening to Tommy's broken phraseology, or issuing necessary orders in a languid, careless voice from which all hope seems to have evaporated. In the course of the afternoon Sir John Coote asks to see her, and she hears for certain what rumor from the servants' hall has already acquainted her with.

"Always a determined fellow with dogs and horses, poor, dear Mordaunt," says her visitor, in the course of explanation. "I have heard that his intimate friends might twist him round their little fingers, but that's neither here nor there; he would never let an animal get the better of him.—Well, that d—d brute of his—excuse my vehemence, Mrs. Mordaunt, but I can't speak of it with any thing like calmness—was in a temper

from the first of the morning. Mordaunt had a deuce of a trouble to keep him straight at all, and, after two or three hard fights between them, the animal's blood was fairly up, and he began to show vice. It happened at the wide jump by Chappell's farm in Stotway. The brook's very much swollen, and we mostly went round.—'I'll take it out of my brute,' says poor Mordaunt, and put him at it like blazes. The animal refused the water twice, then took it with a rush—fell short of the opposite bank, rolled over, and there was an end of it. And I wish to God, my dear child, I had to tell the story to any one but you."

"Did he speak? Who saw him first?" she asks, with white, trembling lips.

"Not a word; it must have been the work of a second—dislocation of the spinal vertebra, you know. I was next behind him, and off my horse in a moment, but it was no use. I saw that directly. We shall never have such a master of the hounds again, Mrs. Mordaunt. It's the saddest thing that's ever happened to me since I rode to my first meet."

"Thank you for telling me. I would rather know all. And you are sure he did not suffer?"

"Quite sure. You should ask Fellows, he belongs to Stotway, and was on the spot in five minutes; but it might as well have been an hour for all the good he could do. And then we carried him to a farm-house close by, and I sent on Colville to break the news to you; but the fool couldn't go through with it, and slunk home half-way, leaving us quite in the dark as to his proceedings; else you may be sure we would never have startled you in the manner we did by bringing the poor fellow straight home without any previous warning."

"Never mind; it was just as well, perhaps; nothing could have softened it," she says, quietly.

"You bear it like a—like a—like a *Trojan*," exclaims Sir John, unable to find any term more suited to the occasion by which to express his admiration.

"I am obliged to bear it," replies Irene; "but it was very sudden, and I don't think I can talk any more about it to-day, please," upon which her visitor takes the hint, and leaves her to herself.

The next day brings Oliver Ralston, full of concern and interest for Irene, as usual, and also not a little grieved at the loss they have mutually sustained.

"He was always so good to me," he says, as soon as the first ice is broken, and Irene has in part confided to him the last interview she had with her husband, "particularly when that old brute Quekett was out of the way."