

"After the past, you think. Dear, I am glad of that past, I am glad even of the . . . woman, for it's thanks to her that you are mine, all mine at last. Ah, Henry, the battle has been a hard one for me. The hand of a dead man struck me through you again and again, but I held on. I knew in the end you would come to me, and you . . . have. Carados is still in his grave at last, only death is against me now, but you are on my side, and we'll fight together and win."

"You—would—marry—me still—me?"

"Yes, when you like. Now will you fight, Henry?"

"Yes, with all my soul. I've been a cur, a liar, and a blackguard, Violet. I'm not fit to touch your hand, but if you want me, such as I am, I am yours. Oh, let me begin now. Give me that stuff in that bottle there. I wouldn't take it before, but now, by God, I'll drink gallons, I'll . . . I'll . . ."

"Henry, Henry, I say! Sir James, Sir James, he's dying, he is . . ."

A hand thrust her unceremoniously aside, and a grey head was bent over the still figure.

"Be quiet," he said roughly; then suddenly turned and, smiling, held out his hand. "Go to bed," he said, "you have chattered long enough."

"He's not . . . dead?"

"Dead, no; he's asleep, worn out, and no wonder, with your cackling. Now stop that," sharply. "Don't faint here. Nurse, take her ladyship to bed, she's overtired. Oh yes, yes, he's all right. Nurse, will you take her ladyship away? See him in the morning? I don't know. Certainly not if you don't go now. Oh, all right, I promise you. Good night."

Sir James, with a sigh of relief, sat down by the bedside and fixed his eyes on the now peaceful face. "Bless me," he muttered, as he watched, "the man's smiling. Hum, had their little explanation, I see."

THE END