

"Took what in turns, Dicky."

"I could sell matches for a little while, while Jimmie came here, and then some one else could come, and then I could come back." Dicky spoke in a very staccato fashion, and the proposition, made in all sincerity, cost him a good deal.

I put my hand under his chin and looked into his earnest eyes.

"No, Dicky," I said, gravely; "*you* were bother enough when you first came—I don't want any one else howling in his tub every morning as you used to do—at least, till we are in a bigger house. But if you like to have a party at the Victoria Coffee House, instead of the railway I promised you for learning those declensions, you may."

Dicky's face fell. He shared our fallen humanity after all—and he had wanted that railway so much.

"You need not decide now," I added. "It is ten days to Easter week. You can decide then. Now you must go to bed."

Dicky stood still, his grey eyes darkening, as Gwynneth's used to darken when she was much moved. "Could we have six, uncle?"

"Twelve," I answered.

Dicky drew a deep breath. "I'll have the party, uncle," he said, firmly. And then his nurse came in, and he went to bed.

He had the party; but only eleven of the invited guests put in an appearance. The absentee was Jimmie. The next day we learned that he had been knocked down and hurt while watching some drunken brawl, and carried off to the nearest hospital. Thither Dicky and I repaired on the following Saturday afternoon. The large, light ward, fragrant with flowers and radiant with spring sunshine, looked very attractive. Dicky looked at all the little white beds and their wan-faced occupants with eager interest, but we did not stop until we reached the one at the end, in which, very pale and hollow-eyed, we saw poor Jimmie.

He was cheerful, and not in much pain. He and Dicky had plenty to say to each other, and after a time I left them and went to talk to the other little patients. At last I went back for Dicky.

"Oh, uncle, where's your stick?" he exclaimed, when we reached the vestibule. I remembered to have put it down by Jimmie's bed. "Run back for it, Dicky," I said. "Or—no; you will think of a hundred more things to say to Jimmie. Wait here while I go."

The nurse, a tall, graceful woman, was bending over Jimmie. She turned round as I came up, and I knew—Gwynneth!

Even after twelve years' separation, people do not fall into each other's arms, off the stage. I said "Gwynneth," and she said, "Mark;" both very quietly.

"Let me see you again," I said, "and soon."

"I shall be off duty at seven," she replied, "but I cannot see you here."

"I will call for you, then," I answered, and came away. We did not even touch hands.

I do not know how those hours went by. But at last I saw her come out of the great door, and went to meet her. We walked on in silence until we reached a little Square, filled with nurse-maids and their charges.

"Now," she said, "you have something to tell me."

"No; something to ask you," was my reply. "You had a child, Gwynneth. Where is he?"

She turned her large eyes on mine. "Dead," she answered. "Oh, why do you ask?"

"You left him with Mrs. May," I went on, "and then—?"

"I went to ask Cousin Jane for help; I found her dying. When I came back—penniless—my boy had died—and Mrs. May had gone."

"Gwynneth, it was a lie. Your child lives."

I had no need to say another word.