

the next moment the colonel was hurrying towards his own house.

In a few moments he was on the way to the station in his motor-car, and an hour later was standing at the door of the house in Peckham to which he had been called.

A clergyman answered his knock, and bade him enter.

"I'm so glad you've come!" he said, gravely. "I'm afraid she won't last much longer, and she seems very anxious to relieve her mind of something that is worrying her. Will you come upstairs now?" he asked. "The doctor is with her," he ended.

"I—I can't think who it is," stammered the colonel. "I don't know anyone of the name of Glover."

"She was a nurse to your son, she says," replied the parson.

"Ah! I think I remember her now, but I can't think what she can want with me. However, of course, I will see her as she wishes it. Please lead the way."

In a few moments he was standing at the bedside of the dying woman, and the doctor, with a whispered caution not to unduly excite the invalid, withdrew. The clergyman, however, remained, and he had brought with him materials for writing.

For a moment there was silence, then the woman spoke in a weak, quavering voice:

"You don't recognize me, sir," she said to the colonel; "but if you remember, I was nurse to your little boy."

"I remember you now," said the colonel, quietly.

The woman was silent for a few moments, then said to the clergyman:

"Please take down what I say." Then, turning to the colonel, she continued: "I am glad I have time to make what amends I can. I did you a terrible wrong, sir, when I was employed by you to look after your son."

"Yes, yes," said the colonel soothingly. "But why recall these painful facts? The poor boy died, he ended, brokenly.

"No, no!" cried the woman, in vehement excitement. "He didn't die!"

"What!" cried the colonel hoarsely; then continued, in a gentler tone: "You must not excite yourself; but you know he died, and I saw him buried."

"No, no, sir!" persisted the woman,

plaintively. "It wasn't your son that died. It was another child that I had changed into his place."

The colonel started violently at these words, and a look of hope passed over his grave face. The next moment it had gone, and given place to one of incredulity. The woman noticed it, and she continued earnestly:

"You don't believe me, sir, but you must!" she said, with such vehemence that her words carried conviction, wild though they seemed.

Then she went on in a weak voice and slowly:

"I feel I haven't time to tell you all, but what I say is true. When your wife died I had complete management of the baby, and you scarcely ever saw it during your wife's illness. Well, I was bribed to exchange it for a child who was already dying. I did so, and the child died, but the other child, which was yours, lived."

The colonel's face was very white now.

"Who bribed you to make the exchange?" he asked, in a low tone.

"I will not tell you that," replied the woman, in a feeble voice.

"Tell me where my child is?" pleaded the colonel.

"I do not know," murmured the woman, and even as she spoke they could see she would not last much longer.

"She had better sign this," whispered the parson, and he placed the document before her.

The woman made an extraordinary effort, and succeeded in scribbling her name at the bottom of her statement. Then she sank back, and they thought she was gone.

Suddenly she started up, and exclaimed, excitedly:

"Why shouldn't I tell you who it was who bribed me? You'll never find your son unless I do. I'll tell you!" she cried, almost fiercely. "It was——" But before the name she wished to pronounce could pass her lips, she fell back exhausted by her superhuman effort to speak.

"Who was it?" inquired the colonel, gently.

But no answer came to his question, and after a few moments he and the clergyman summoned the doctor, who was waiting outside.