

his life with you and . . . her again. I'm not fit for her. I'm not fit."

"I think you've expiated some of your sins, haven't you?"

"You think!" Wylde half laughed. "You can think what you like, but I reckon you won't think what I've been feeling since Killin. You . . . a man like you . . . who's never wanted to live with every inch of him . . . and she meant about the only thing that had ever been sacred to me . . . and I . . . would have said anything against her then to get my knife into you. . . ."

Surrey could not understand. The huge primeval forces that dwell in some souls had never swayed him.

"Poor old chap," he said, simply.

And as Wylde turned down the room again Surrey fell into step beside him, and the Colonel, going to bed an hour later, saw the two figures in the dim room where the storm rattled, treading up and down, up and down, together.

But he did not halt, even a moment, though his heart asked the question which was in his eyes when Surrey came to his room next morning.

Surrey looked tired, for Wylde's sharper, fiercer nature had not been easy handling. He looked out of the window on the street of sickly sunlight, and he spoke bravely.

"Wylde will stay with you six months, sir. At the Manor, or where you please. But you will have to let him go then. And nothing would move him in regard to Peggy. I would have had no right to give him any hope there, but he did not want it. He says he won't ask her, and he will keep his word . . . unless that temper of his upsets him again."

"That is more than I had hoped for," said the Colonel. "I . . . I could not have lost you both at once. And Surrey . . . my dear lad . . . you will always be my son, too. Always."

"I know that, sir. I know you have room in your heart for us both. And for Peggy."