

"My son? Oh, him as just went out. He'll do. He's got lots to do. Let him go."

"Yes," said Derry, quaintly. "I have let him go. How are you to-day, Leppard?"

"Jest tired, miss, mortal tired. Jest wonderin' and marvelin' why the Lord A'mighty has kep' me so long tackin' up an' down outside harbor, when I want to go in and take up a 'evenly anchrige. I've jest been askin'—my son as went out theer, didn't yer say twar my son?—and he ses mebbe I'm to ride quarantine afore euterin' a sinless land. Mebbe so, eh, miss?"

"Is your son often here with you?"

"Never, scarce. He's got his livin' to get. There's wheels."

Derry went to the cottage door to show herself, and Ella drew up her ponies as near as she could. The little groom sprung down from behind; and when Derry had seated herself luxuriously beside her sister, he backed from the ponies' heads, touched his corded hat, and turned homeward, briskly walking. "For I mean to have you to myself to-day, dear," Ella explained, as they started slowly along the narrow drive. "The ponies are deliciously fresh, and we will have a proof of their pace presently. You are not nervous?"

"Why, Ella, you remind me of Amos Pickett's unfailing inquiry whether I have courage to 'old the 'orse."

"But Mrs. Frayd's little wooden animal is rather different, isn't it?" inquired Ella, smiling as her critical gaze dwelt on the sleek, restive young animals she drove.

"How was it you did not bring Sarah?" inquired Derry, while she was recalling Steven Basset's criticism on her sister's driving, and endorsing it, for Ella did indeed manage the ponies wonderfully for a young and delicate girl.

"She did ask to come—she actually did even to-day—but I refused her. She is sometimes really too presumptuous. This way is new to you, isn't it, Derry?"

"Yes. I have never before been beyond Leppard's cottage in this direction."

"Do you like it?"

"Leppard's cottage?"

"Don't be absurd, Derry. Do you like this drive?"

"I will tell you presently. It is rather a derogatory route for your stylish equipage. What will it be further on?"

"Of course we descend into the level road again; but in the meantime we shall turn one corner, where the view will strike you, I think. People call it worth looking at; so mind you are ready. It is rather a sharp turn—at least you may think so—but you know that my ponies and I thoroughly understand each other."

They were going quite slowly still along the bridle-road that cut the incline. On Ella's side the ascent was gradual to the crest of the downs, a soft grassy slope. On Derry's side the descent was more abrupt; and she was looking dreamingly down it when her sister called her attention to a small object in advance. "What little lunatic is it," she asked.

Racing on at the side of the road in front of them was a tiny stunted figure which was familiar to Derry. The child had nothing over her pinafore, and her scanty black locks were blown every way by the wind, as she sped on, her head never turning, her whole attention evidently on something before her, not behind; something to which she was flying at the top of her small speed; un-looking, unlistening for anything to follow.

"Do stop, Ella, and take up that little elf," pleaded Derry. "It is my poor little aged child from Harrack's."

"She wants to be run over," observed Ella, tightening her reins; "at least she does not seem to care whether she is or not, scampering in that headlong fashion."

"Just take her as far as she is racing to, will you?" entreated Derry, without a smile. "I will hold her by me. It can not be far that the poor little mortal wishes to go. May we?"

"You are very much in earnest, Derry. How could I refuse you?" was the gentle answer; and guiding her ponies aside as far as she could, Ella overtook the hurrying figure and drew up.

"Penkus," said Derry, turning to face her, "come here."