

"I DON'T WANT THAT STUFF"

Is what a lady of Boston said to her husband when he brought home some medicine to cure her of sick headache and neuralgia, which had made her miserable for fourteen years.

CARRIED BY STORM!

By the Author of "Guy Earle's Courtship," "A Wonderful Woman," "A Mad Marriage," "Redmond O'Donnell," etc.

PART III.

CHAPTER V.—CONTINUED.

Nothing more is said. He places her in the carriage beside Madame Ericson, and leans forward to talk until it starts. It has not been a very low-like meeting or parting, and he notices that Joanna is very pale as she leans out with a smile to wave her hand in adieu.

"Twilight is falling, misty and blue, as he reaches his journey's end, and glad to stretch his legs a bit, he starts off briskly to walk to a hotel. The streets are crowded; the lamps are lit, and twinkle through the summer gloaming. Suddenly there is a commotion, a shouting, a scattering and screaming of the crowd. A pair of horses has taken fright at something, and started at a furious pace along the streets.

"This is a situation! He glances about in consternation, and sees near the glowing globes of a druggist's. To hurry hither, to summon assistance, to place her in a chair, and support her there while the man of drugs examines her wounds, is but the work of a moment.

"A very nasty little cut," the druggist says, "and unpleasantly close to the temple. Still she is not killed, and this wound will not amount to much if she has received no other hurt. Knocked down by the carriage-pole, you say? Poor young lady! Hold up her head, sir, if you please; I will stop the bleeding, and bind up the cut with a strip of plaster."

Livingston obeys. He looks for the first time closely at the drooping face before him, and finds his interest and sympathy considerably heightened by the fact that it is an exceedingly pretty one, despite blood-stains and pallor. She is a very young creature, not more than sixteen to look at, with a dark sweet face and quantities of wavy dark hair. The long lashes rest on ivory cheeks. With gentle touch the druggist passes aside the loosened braids of hair, to bind up the wound. Two lines he has read somewhere occur to Frank's memory:

"Love, if thyresses be dark,  
How dark those hidden eyes must be?"

"A pretty little soul," he thinks. "I wonder who she is, and what we are to do with her next?"

"Eve, as he thinks it, there is a flutter of the drooping lids, a quiver through all the slight frame, and then, slowly, two dark, deep eyes unclose and look up in bewildered astonishment at the strange faces bending over her—the faces of men.

"Oh! what is it?" she says, shrillingly. "Where am I? What has happened? My head—my head—she puts up her hand in a frightened sort of way, and her lips begin to quiver like a child's. "Oh! what is it?" she says again.

"You were knocked down by a runaway horse—do you not remember?" Livingston says, gently. "Your head is hurt a little, but not much, I hope. Do you feel hurt anywhere else?"

She looks at him—dark, solemn, childish eyes that are—and her lips quiver still. "I—I don't know. Oh! let me go home, please! I must go home! It is so dark, and my feet feel like a little off or more of pain."

"But, oh, please, I want to go home!" she says, indeed, like a child. Livingston takes her hand in both his, and tries to soothe her as he might a child.

"You shall go home; do not be distressed, do not be afraid. I am sure you are not much hurt. I will take you home. Stay here, while I go and get a carriage. I will not be a moment."

She looks up at him again, and with his utter amazement says this: "I know you. You are Frank Livingston!"

"Good heavens!" the young man exclaims, stunned by this unexpected speech; "and who are you?"

Instead of answering, she droops back in her chair, so white, so death-like, that the druggist rings over the counter for a restorative.

"Never mind asking her questions now," he says. "Do you not see she is fainting? Go for the carriage, and get her home as quickly as you can. She ought to be put to bed and attended to at once. She has had a severe shock."

Livingston obeys. In a moment he is out of the store—almost in another—he is back with a cab.

"She is better again," the shopman says. Take her home at once. It is at 27 Elm street, she says—a mile off or more. Tell the man who drives to hurry and as easy as he can. Her ankle is hurt and I think you will have to carry her to the carriage."

This is neither difficult nor unpleasant. He lifts the light, youthful figure in his arms and carries her with infinite gentleness and care, and deposits her on the back seat. Then he gets in opposite her, gives the cabman the address, and they are driven slowly through the lamp-lit city streets. He looks at her in intense curiosity, as she sits before him, her head drooping against the back, her eyes closed, her face drawn into an expression of silent pain. He can ask her nothing now. She looks almost ready to faint away for a third time.

"Poor little soul! He thinks, exceedingly sorry for her—poor little pretty, pale, I wonder who she is, and how she comes to know me?"

But conjecture was useless; he cannot

place her. Long, however, before they reach 37. Pine street, what he has feared comes to pass. She stoops forward, and faints dead away from sheer exhaustion and pain.

Livingston will never forget that drive; it is always twilight, lit with yellow stars of light, and the slender figure lying inert and senseless in his arms.

They reach their destination at last—a cottage set in a pretty garden. A lady comes hurriedly out of the door as they draw up. There is still light enough to see her face plainly—a pale, handsome face—and Frank Livingston utters a cry.

"Good Heaven!" he exclaims, "it is really you?"

His cry is echoed, and it is but only reply, for she catches sight of the drooping figure in the carriage.

"My Leo! my Leo!" she cries out, "oh, what is this? What has happened? Oh, great Heaven, is she dead?"

"My dear Mrs. Abbott, no, only hurt a little, and unconscious just at present from the shock. Do not alarm yourself—indeed there is no need. Let me carry her in and send for a doctor at once. I am sure she is not seriously hurt. I will tell you all about it in a moment."

He carries her into the parlour and lays her on a sofa. In one moment Mrs. Abbott has recovered the self-repressed calm habitual to her. She gives a few hurried directions to the driver, and then bends over her pale little daughter.

"I have sent for my son," she says, "I chance to know where he is. Frank Livingston, is this really you?" She holds out one slim, transparent hand, and looks wonderingly in his face. Tell me all about it, and how you came to be with my little Leo like this."

"And it is Leo—little Leo?" he says, gazing down at the still white face, "dear little Leo, and I did not know her. What a stupid dot I grow!" She recognized me at once. Accident has been good to me to-day, since it has thrown me in the way of the friends I have been longing for the past five years to meet."

He tells her what has happened in rapid words, and as he ends, a latch-key opens the hall door, and a young man hurriedly enters.

"An accident?" he says, in alarm. "Leo hurt? Mother, what is this?"

It is Geoffrey Lamar. He kneels beside his still insensible sister, without a glance at the stranger; pale with alarm, and takes her wrist.

"Geoffrey, look here," his mother says, "do not you recognize your friend?"

"Frank!" He springs to his feet and holds out both hands.

"Dear old Geoff!" And then there is a long, strong, silent clasp—a long, glad, affectionate gaze. Then Geoffrey returns to Leo.

"What is this?" he asks again. "What has happened to Leo?"

Livingston repeats his story, and in a moment Dr. Lamar is in action. He carries his sister up to her room, followed by his mother, while Frank sits below and anxiously waits. He looks out across the darkening flower-beds to the starry sky, and thinks how strangely, after all these years, he has found his friends. Half an hour passes before Geoffrey returns.

"Well?" Frank anxiously says.

"It is not particularly well, still it might have been worse. The shock is more to be apprehended than the hurt—she is a tender little blossom, our poor Leo. She has injured her ankle, in addition to the cut in her head. How fortunate you chanced to be on the spot. Thank you, Frank, for helping my little sister."

He holds out his hand, all the love his heart holds for that little sister shining in his eyes. Livingston takes it, and gazes at him. What a distinguished-looking fellow he is, he thinks; how gallant a gentleman he looks, how thoroughbred, how like his mother in that erect and stately poise of the head—that clear, steady glance of the eye.

"You have not changed in the least, Frank," Geoffrey says. "I would have known you anywhere."

"You have changed, old fellow; Frank returns, but not for the worse. And so you have been here all the time, our next door neighbor almost, while I have been looking for you high and low. What paper walls hold us asunder? What are you about? Practising your profession?"

"As you see, and after an up-hill struggle enough, conquering fate at last, I am happy to say. And now that you have found us, we mean to keep you for a while," Dr. Lamar says, gaily. "So make up your mind to stay until further notice. Our mansion is not particularly commodious, as you may see, but we always manage to have a spare room for a friend. And of all the friends of the old time, my dear fellow, you know not one can be more heartily welcome than yourself!"

There is little pressing need. Frank does object, but these objections are easily overcome. It puts off the evil hour of maternal tears and reproaches, and that is something. So he stays, and his secret will be his secret for a few days longer at least.

CHAPTER VI.

JOAN BENNETT.

Joanna sits in almost total silence during the short drive to the depot. The look in Livingston's eyes haunts her—the forced gaiety of his tone has struck on her heart like a blow. She has known it will be there sometime, but not so soon, not the very morning after his impulsive declaration.

"Carried by storm," Ah, but not held long. More than he has yet felt himself, she has read in his face—pain, regret, the resolution to make the best at all cost of the most fatal words of his life.

Professor Ericson chatters like a German magpie; luckily, like the magpie, he waits for no answer. They reach the station barely in time to get tickets, checks and seats, and then are off through the jubilant sunshine of the brilliant summer morning. Madame Ericson composes herself by a shady window with a German novel; the professor goes off to the smoking-car, and Joanna is left undisturbed to gaze at the flying landscape, and muse over lovers who propose in haste and repent just as hastily. As it chanced—if things ever chance—her seat is near and facing the car door. As it opens to admit the conductor on his rounds, her glance alights for a second on the figure of a brakeman standing on the platform.

She leans forward, with a sudden eager interest that drives even her lover from her mind, to look again. Surely that strong tall figure, and all that blue-black curly hair, are familiar. He turns for a moment, sending a careless glance backward to where she sits, and Joanna sinks back in her seat with a gasp.

"For years she has been seeking him vainly, and he stands before her now, when no one could be further from her thoughts."

"They are, nearly New York before Ericson returns, Joanna seizes upon him at once.

"There is a brakeman on board this train that I know," she says, eagerly. "I want to see him—I must see him, and you will please

hunt him up for me and tell him so. Perhaps you have seen him—a tall, dark, good-looking young man. He was out there not half an hour ago."

The professor stares a moment, then laughs.

"Klein Gott! She wants to see the handsome young brakeman! Shall I tell him to call on Miss Jenny Wild, the celebrated vocalist?"

"Look! look! There he is," Miss Wild exclaims, unheeding, "standing on the platform. No, do not speak to him until Madame and I are in the carriage; then give him my card and tell him to appoint an hour, and I will be at home to receive him. Say no more than that; he will not refuse, I am sure; he will be too curious. It is the most fortunate thing in the world; he is a person I have been wishing to see for years and years."

They rise and leave the train, find a hack, and take their seats, always with an eye on the tall dark young brakeman. He is a handsome fellow, as he leans in an attitude of careless strength against the car, his straw hat pushed back off his snubnosed gipsy face, a red handkerchief knotted loosely about his throat.

"He might stand as a model for a Roman bandit at this moment," Joanna thinks, with a smile; the dark and dashing brigand of romance. There! the professor has accosted him, and now—see the profound astonishment depicted on his face!"

She watches the puzzled amazement of the young man, and that laugh clears away the last of the vapours. After all, Frank Livingston has not hurt her very badly, judging by that clear laugh.

"He will come," says the professor, returning, and wiping his warm face. He is a greatly bewildered young man. He denies knowing any Miss Jenny Wild—thinks she must be mistaken in supposing she knows him, but will be at her service, if she likes, in an hour. I told him that would do—will it?"

"Admirably," Joanna says, still laughing. "I saw his incredulity in his face; he is watching us distrustfully at this moment. An hour is short notice; but short or long I shall be most exceedingly glad to see him."

Promptly at the hour's end, the young brakeman, in much the same costume as on the car, with the addition of a linen coat, presents himself at the cottage and inquires for Miss Jenny Wild. He is ushered into a pretty parlour, and in the subdued light, sees advancing a tall and elegant-looking young lady in navy-blue silk, with a cream-white rose in her hair, a smile of welcome on her lips, and one hand extended. She stands without a word before him. The young man stands in turn, and gazes, more puzzled perhaps than he has ever been before in his life. She is the first to speak.

"Well," she says, laughing outright, "will you not shake hands?"

"I don't mind," the young fellow answers, and takes in his great brown paw, the slim, cool member she extends, "but I'll be blessed if I know you! And yet it does seem to me I've seen you before, too."

"I should think so—seen me, felt me, boxed my ears many a time and oft!"

"What?"

"Ah, you would not do it now, I dare say. You are much too gallant, no doubt, but such is the fact. Look very hard, Judson. Surely five years cannot have changed me so very much."

"By Jupiter!" Judson Sleaford shouts "it is—it is—our Joanna!"

"Your Joanna—Sleaford's Joanna—Wild Joanna! Yes—Miss Jenny Wild now, though, to all the rest of the world. Dear old Jud! how glad I am to see you at last!"

He holds her hands and stands gazing at her, eyes and mouth wide with wonder.

"Joanna! our Joanna! got up like this—a swell—a high-toned young lady—dressed in silks and roses! Well, by George! And here I've been looking for you high and low for the past five years! Upon my soul, Jo, I can hardly believe my eyes? Is it you? Why, you used to be ugly, and now I swear you are—"

"Ugly still, Jud—fine feathers make fine birds, that is all. But sit down. I am dying for a long, long chat with you. Dear old fellow, how nice, and brown, and well you are looking!"

She draws forward a puffy chair of satin and springs, and Judson Sleaford sinks down on it. But his blue eyes are still riveted on Joanna's face; he cannot believe them. He is trying to recall the bareheaded, red-haired, fiercely-scowling child he remembers so well, and a pale, fair-sided lady, so good to look at, and make one of the two. And he cannot. No man could. Every trace of that Joanna is gone!

"I can't believe it," he cries out. "It is all a fraud! It isn't Joanna at all. You can't be. Why she had red hair, and you—"

"Have red hair still—don't so sorry though as in those days. Don't stare so, Jud. Your eyes will drop on the carpet! It is I, myself—Joanna—no other. I wish it were."

"Why?" bluntness—who should you wish it? I think you are one of the luckiest girls that ever was born."

"Do you?" she says, a tinge of bitterness in her tone. "Because I wear silk dresses and live in a Newport cottage? Well, it is better, certainly, than life at the Red Farm, but as for being the luckiest girl ever born—"

"What do you call it then?" he demands—having the fortune of a princess left you in this way? By Jove! I call it the greatest stroke of luck that ever was heard of, out of the Arabian Nights."

Joanna stares in turn.

"The fortune of a princess? What do you mean? I have had no fortune left me. I sing for my living, and make a very good one, but as for fortune—Well, I pay for my dresses, and so on, and have some pocket-money left, if you call that the fortune of a princess."

It has seemed that by no possibility can Judson Sleaford stare harder than he has been doing, but at these words he absolutely gasps.

"Do—do you mean to say," he demands, as soon as he can speak, "that you don't know?"

"Don't know what?"

"Good Lord above! Do you mean to tell me, Geoffrey Lamar never hunted you up, after all?"

"Geoffrey Lamar! I have not seen nor heard of Geoffrey Lamar since I left Brighton nearly six years ago."

Judson Sleaford falls back in his chair, and looks helplessly at her.

"And all this—this cottage and furniture, and that dress, and—everything—do you mean to say you work for and earn all that?"

"I work for and earn all that. I have never had a penny that I did not work for and earn. I do not know what you are talking about. I wish you would cease staring and explain," cries Joanna, almost losing patience.

Jud takes out his red handkerchief and wipes his heated face. His amazement at finding Wild Joanna in this stately young lady, walking in silk attire, is not for a moment to be equalled by the amazement he

feels at finding her ignorant of who she is. mingled with the amazement is delight that it has been reserved for him to tell her.

"Then by thunder, this is the luckiest day's work, Joanna, you have done in a long time! Just let me catch my breath, will you, and don't hurry me. I'll tell you everything directly, everything you've been wanting to know all your life. First of all, let me ask you some questions. You know rich John Abbott shot himself?"

"Yes, I know that. Poor Mrs. Abbott."

"Ah! poor Mr. Abbott, I should say. You don't happen to know why he did it?"

"Certainly not. I only saw it in the papers, and the reason assigned was temporary aberration of intellect."

"Yes, just so. Temporary fiddlestick! He knew what he was about—he was going to be found out, and was afraid of the law and his high and mighty missis. So he put a bullet through his brain, and got out of it that way. Then—do you know what Mrs. Abbott and young Lamar did then?"

"Shut up! Wood and left the place. Yes, but even that I only discovered a few weeks ago. One can hardly wonder—so sensitive as Mrs. Abbott was, and after so shocking a tragedy. I am not surprised she has never returned. But where are they, Judson?"

"You would like to see them?" he asks, looking at her curiously. "You are as fond of them as ever?"

"Can you ask? They were my friends when I had not a friend in the world. They did all they could to lift me out of the misery and degradation they found me in. As fond of them as ever! I tell you, Judson Sleaford, I would lay down my life for Mrs. Abbott."

"Ah!" Jud says, in a peculiar tone, "and for Geoffrey Lamar?"

"And for Geoffrey Lamar. What I am to do I owe to them. All I have or ever may have, I owe to them. Why do you look like that, and speak like that? What do you know of them? Tell me where they are, if you know that?"

"I don't know that. And you need not be in a rush to find them, as far as they are concerned. I dare say, if the truth was known, you're about the last person in this world they want to see. Why, I heard Geoffrey Lamar as good as swear to find you, if you were above ground, and restore you to your rights, and this is the way he keeps his word!"

"Heard him swear! Swear to whom?"

"To dad—poor old chap—the night he died."

"And restore me to my rights? What are you talking of, Jud?" she asks, in a maze of wonder.

"I'm talking of what I heard with my own ears, though nobody knows to this day I heard it. I'm talking of what I heard dad tell young Lamar on his death-bed, and young Lamar swore to tell you. He hasn't done it, it seems. Dad sent for him to do justice to you at last, and tell him what he had over his step-father, who you were, and let him right you, seeing he was your friend."

"Who you were?" She hears those words and starts to her feet. She stands before him, her hands clasped, her eyes wild and wide, her lips breathless and apart.

"Who I am! Judson—at last!"

"Ah! don't be in a hurry, Joanna. I can't know whether you will like it or not when you know—so fond as you are of Mrs. Abbott, too. I tell you if I knocked Lamar over like a bullet. If ever you saw a corpse take a walk—I don't suppose you did—he looked like that when he left the house. But he believed what he was told, and dad gave him the paper that proved your father and mother's marriage, and your baptism, out in San Francisco. He needn't deny it, for I saw it all, if you ever leave to go to law about it—and I would, by Jupiter! Fortunes like that don't go begging every day, and you're the rightful heiress of every stick, and stone, and penny. Fight it out, Joanna, and I'll stand by you through thick and thin."

"But who—who—was am I?" Joanna cries out. "Tell me that—never mind the rest. Who am I?"

"Oh, I forgot," Jud says, coolly and slowly. "Your name is Joan Bennett, and you're the eldest daughter and sole heiress of the late John Abbott, Esq., millionaire."

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORY.

"You see it was the night dad died," says Jud Sleaford. "You know about that, don't you? It all began about you. You had run away with Blake while dad was away attending a prize fight. When he came home and heard of it—it was the very dickens of a day, I remember, in the way of wind and rain—he just mounted and rode straight as a die for Abbott Wood. I reckon he thought Mr. Abbott had made off with you, or had some hand in it. He was stone white with rage. What would have happened there and then, if Abbott had been at home, the Lord only knows. He was not, and dad came back in one of his black rages. But it seems he would have left word for Abbott to follow. And Abbott did follow that very same night!"

Jud is rapidly telling his story, and a very vivid narrator he is. The first overwhelming shock of surprise is over, and Joanna sits listening, pale, breathless, absorbed.

"We were all off to dance, I remember," goes on Judson, "only the girl was at home. Early in the morning, as we were driving back, we were met by old Hunt—you know, next place to ours—with the word that there had been a row at our house, and that dad was done for. We hurried on, and there we found him, poor fellow, 'wetting' in his gore, as the stories put it, and almost at the last gasp. Almost, but not quite. Dad was so uncommon strong, that he gave death a tough tussel for it before he would go. We got him to bed, sent for the doctor, and from first to last I was his nurse. The girls were afraid of him; he was as savage sick as well. Poor old dad, and Dan—but you know what Dan was—he wouldn't be paid to enter the room."

"Well—I took care of dad. I gave him his medicines and his drinks, and that, and did the best I knew for him. By-and-by he got back his voice, and the first thing he says was: 'Send for the young swell—young Lamar.'"

"Abbott's step-son?" I say, for, of course, we all knew from the girl that Abbott had been there, and that it was in a fracas with him he had got his death-blow.

"And dad's eyes shot out sparks of fire after their old fashion."

"Can't you hear, you fool?" he says, in a fierce whisper. "Abbott's step-son, young Lamar. Go for him, bring him here at once. I have something he ought to know to tell him. He must come."

"Of course I went. It was another petting storm, and when I got to the house I saw the missis. I gave her the message. Young Lamar was in New York, but the telegraphed for him at once, and that same afternoon, just before dark, he came, and I took him up stairs to dad's room."

"Now, dad, although he was dying as fast as he could, kept up a wonderful deal of

strength to the very last. His voice sounded much as ever, a little weaker, but to hear him you would never know he was so near his end. And he had worked himself up into a fever, waiting for Lamar. He could not die, he said, until he had seen him. I brought the young fellow in, and offered to fetch a light, but dad wouldn't have none. He ordered me out of the room, and I went, but only as far as the closet where we hang clothes. You remember how thin the partitions were, and the holes in the lath and plaster? I was curious to know what he had to say so particular. I was sure it was some revenge he was going to take on John Abbott. I sat there and listened, Joanna, and I heard the whole story, and found out all I heart it and you at last."

"There is a brief, breathless pause. Jud draws a long breath. Joanna hardly seems to breathe or stir."

"Oh, go on!" she says, in a whisper, and young Sleaford resumes.

"I'll tell it in my own way—not in dad's—he cursed a good deal, you know, and abused Abbott. You won't care for that. It seems that long before, when Abbott was quite a young man, and just beginning to get on in California, dad came there a widower, with all of us, from Liverpool, and a sister of his with him, who took care of us. This sister, it appears, was a good looking young woman, and John Bennett—that was Abbott's name then, and his right name—took a fancy to her, and her to him, and he made her his wife. His wife, mind you, all right, and tight, and legal. Well—he lived with her for awhile, and was good enough to her and that, and gave dad a helping hand as well, and then all of a sudden he started off somewhere up country to the mines, on a spec, intending to come back all fair and square when his business was settled, and not meaning desertion, or anything like that. But that's what it proved to be—he did not come back—did never set eyes on him again till he set eyes on him as the rich John Abbott, of Brighton, and his wife never saw him in this world more. Whether they have met in the next is more than I know; she was alive and well on the night dad told the story."

"Well, Bennett—or Abbott, whichever you like—had struck a vein of luck up there in the hill country among the mines, and wasn't coming back. It was a wild region, no women there, and he didn't want to fetch his wife. So he wrote; all honest and square, you see, at first, and sent money. Then the wife had a baby—you can get a fever of some sort after, and went stark out of her mind. At first her husband was anxious about her, got nurses and so on, but after a time, as that seemed to do no good, he sent word to dad to put her in an insane asylum, and he would pay the damage. The young one—you again—was to be put out to nurse, and to look proper care of it. You again—was christened Joan, after his mother, Joan Bennett. Bennett didn't care himself, you understand—was too busy making money, but he sent the useful to dad, and dad obeyed so far as to put his sister in the asylum, and pocket the money sent for you. Things went on like that for a couple of years, then all at once Bennett disappears, and from that day not a trace of him was to be found. After that dad went to the bad. While Bennett sent money it was well enough, but dad always hated money, and shirked it; so poverty came, and he dodged about with us 'uns from pillar to post, until at last, after some nine years of it, he settled us in a wild part of Pennsylvania to shift for ourselves, and started off himself on the tramp. There's a fate in these things, maybe. He tramped along until he came to Brighton, and there, of course, one of the first people pointed out to him was the rich man of the place, Mr. John Abbott. Of course dad knew his man at a look. There he was, as large as life, as rich as Rothschild, with a new wife, a new daughter, a new name, and a step-son. The other wife, the lawful wife, was alive and well out in San Francisco, as dad knew; and here he was, a blooming big, dad knew; the proudest, ploudest lady in the land for number two."

"Well, dad was tickled, you may believe. All this time he had kept you, not because he wanted you, or cared about you, but because he didn't know what to do with you. You were a trump card in his hand now."

"He took a night, and thought it all over, before he showed himself. Abbott was in his power, he knew, but he did not dislike Abbott, and he made up his mind not to be too hard on him, to get a good living out of him, and let him off at that. He didn't bear no malice, he didn't want to show Abbott up, there was nothing to be gained by holding his tongue. Dad didn't want to be a gentleman, and rob Abbott outright, he only wanted to be flush in his own way. As to deserting his crazy wife, and taking up with this handsome lady, dad didn't blame him for that either—it was only what he would have done himself. As to you, he made up his mind to say that you were dead. He didn't quite know why, but he thought that if Abbott guessed who you were he might try to spirit you away. Then, when he had thought it well out, and settled his plans, he layisid Abbott, in company with Colonel Ventnor, and I heard him laugh as he told Lamar that night—ay, dying as he was, he laughed, when he thought how struck of a heap John Abbott was when he first saw his face. After that I needn't tell you what followed. He got the Red Farm given to him, sent for us 'uns, and settled us all there. You know the life we led, jolly for me, but denuded hard for you, I must say. Dad owned he fairly hated you after that—why, he didn't know but he did. All the hate he might have bestowed on your father, he gave to you; so you were ill-treated morning, noon and night. And I'm ashamed to say, by me as well as the rest. I ask your pardon now, Joanna."

"The young fellow says it with real feeling; he is honestly sorry, and she sees it. She gives him her hand, and she starts to find how cold it is."

"You need not, she says. 'You alone never were cruel to me, Judson. Bat, oh, my childhood! what a youth has been mine!'"

"Ah! Jud says, with a hard breath of sympathy. 'Well, then, the next was the coming of Geoffrey Lamar, and the sudden interest he took in you. Perhaps John Abbott suspected—nobody knows—he refused to let you come to Abbott Wood. You remember the evening Lamar came and told you so? Dad took the matter in hand, through pure contrariness and cussedness, as he owned; he went to the big house, and he made Abbott let you come. His wife should look after you, and nobody else; his daughter should be your companion; his high-toned step-son your friend. And he had his way