

Now, alas! the festive aspect of the scene was abruptly changed. O'Desmond's grief at this most untoward ending to his entertainments was painful to witness. Argyll's generous nature plunged him into a state of deep contrition for his passionate action.

The women, one and all, were so shocked and excited by the sight of blood and the rumour, which quickly gained credence, that Wilfred Effingham was dying, that tearful lamentations and hysterical cries were heard in all directions. Nor indeed until it was authoritatively stated by the medical practitioner of the district, who was luckily present, that Mr. Effingham having been run through the body, had therefore received a dangerous but not necessarily fatal wound, was consolation possible.

This gentleman, however, later on would by no means commit himself to a definite opinion. 'Without doubt it was a critical case. Though the *cœliac axis* had been missed, by a miracle, the *vasa-vasorum* blood-vessel had suffered lesion. The left subclavian artery had been torn through, yet, from its known power of contraction, he trusted that the interior lining would be closed, when further loss of blood would cease. Of course, unfavourable symptoms might supervene at any moment—at any moment. At present the patient was free from pain. Quiet—that is, absolute rest—was indispensable. With no exciting visits, and—yes—with the closest attention and good nursing, a distinctly favourable termination might be—ahem—hoped for.'

But an early doom, either alone or with all the aids that affection, friendship, ay or devoted love, could bring, was not written in the book of fate against Wilfred Effingham's name. In the course of a week the popular practitioner alluded to had the pleasure of informing the anxious inhabitants of the Yass district 'that the injury having, as he had the honour to diagnose, providentially not occurred to the trunk artery, the middle coat of the smaller blood-vessel had, from its elastic and contractile nature, after being torn by the partially blunted end of the foil, caused a closure. In point of fact, the injury had yielded to treatment. He would definitely pledge himself, in fact, that the patient was bordering upon convalescence. In a week or two he would be ready to support a removal to The Chase, where doubtless his