

"Karl is here, Gareth, and your father—shall I bring them?"

"Yes—both."

I went to the door and opened it, and they crept across the room to the bedside. Gustav knelt down on one side and took her hand and pressed his lips to it. The Colonel stood on the other side; and I lifted her other hand from beneath the bed clothes and laid it where her father could hold it.

She thanked me with a look, and whispered: "Kiss me, Christabel."

I bent and kissed her; and the tears were standing thick in my eyes as I drew away.

"Father!"

Just the word and the look of entreaty; and he stooped down and kissed her too.

Her eyes lingered on him a moment, and then she turned her face slowly round to Gustav, whose head was still bowed over the hand he held:

"Husband!"

He did not catch the faint whisper; and I touched him on the shoulder. He started up to find her eyes on him, and then understood; and he too kissed her. She kept her eyes on him; and he kissed her again.

"My darling wife," he murmured.

She looked at him intently.

"I am so sorry, Karl."

It was her last word. The flickering remnant of her strength was spent in a smile of love to him;