

parent, and he perceived, he did not know how, that there were people in the room.

He must ask who was there. . . .

But there was no answer. He wondered whether he really had spoken. He would try again. . . .

This time there came an answer; and he knew it for Aunt Anna's whisper.

"Yes, my darling?"

Ah! that was all right. He was really in communication with people. But hadn't she heard what he had said? He must say it again. . . .

A voice began buzzing in answer. How could he possibly hear if people spoke so fast? They must speak slowly. He would say so. . . .

That was better. . . .

Oh! Algy was there, was he? Then it must be after eleven. He was to have been here by eleven to-day . . . or was it yesterday? Or last week? Well; he was here. Good old Algy! Who else?

Oh! Masterson was here, was he; and Mrs. Templemore . . . and Charleson . . . and Nurse Deacon. . . . Wait: that's too fast . . . Nurse Deacon . . . and . . . and Aunt Anna. But why wasn't Mr. Morpeth here? He wanted Mr. Morpeth. . . . He would say so. . . .

Oh! Mr. Morpeth had been sent for, had he? That was all right. And Father Richardson? Father Richardson? . . . He had been here, had he? And gone again. But would be back soon.

"Speak more slowly, Aunt Anna, please."

That was better; he could understand it like that.

"Father Richardson—has—been—here—and—has said—all the prayers—for the dying——"

For the dying? Was he dying? Of course he was! What a fool he was to forget that! That was why everyone was here.

Dying!

He fell into an interior musing upon the word; and the walls appeared to grow a little opaque again as he meditated. He could contemplate only one thought at a time—