

smile on Mrs. Pyke's sunken mouth when her mistress condescended to put an ace on her king, and heard her faint clack of apology when she secured the odd trick for herself.

Jeanne wondered why both the old servants affected violet as their only decoration, and came to the conclusion that it must be because they thought it the most respectful colour for servants to wear, next to unrelieved black.

Dunham, another silent witness of the game, had been interested only in the flush on Miss Marney's face, and the stertorous difficult breathing which was painfully audible in the heavily curtained double-windowed room.

The rubber was cut short by some astounding *coups*, and a timely revoke, on the part of Mrs. Pyke, in deference to private signals from Dunham, who was seated a little behind her mistress; when it was over another time-honoured ceremony was gone through.

A glass of madeira was poured out very solemnly, and presented to the aged housekeeper, as a recompense and refreshment after her labours.

Pyke received this mark of favour with perennial surprise and gratitude; venturing to express a humble wish for Miss Marney's good health before she swallowed the wine, and making a second curtsey before she retired finally from the apartment.

Jeanne, too, had been dismissed—but with a gracious smile, an intimation that she should in future address her relative as Aunt Caroline, rather than as Aunt Marney—and a promise that an early interview should be accorded in the morning.

During the night, however, a great bustle and commotion arose in the old house, of which little Jeanne, sleeping soundly after her journey, and forgotten by the terrified domestics, knew nothing.

She learnt next day, that her grand-aunt was very ill, and that she had had some kind of a stroke or seizure. Dunham was reticent concerning details, but she explained that Jeanne