

"Lor' bless you, my dear lady," says the sympathizing Mrs. Wells, "the dear young gentleman's no more drowned than I am! See how he's a-trying to raise hisself, the pretty dear! Let me take him from you, ma'am. He must be a deal too heavy for your arms."

"Let me place him in the bed," says Muiraven, gently.

"No! no! I am quite able to carry him," Irene answers, staggering to her feet. "Mrs. Wells, let me have the hot bath at once, or he may take a chill.—Make up the fire, Susan, and boil his bread-and-milk.—And mamma will undress you, Tommy," she continues, in soft, cooing accents to the child. "Mamma will take all these wet clothes off her little Tommy-boy, and put him in a nice warm bed, and tell him stories all day long. Oh, my love! my baby!—what should I have done if I had lost you!"

And so, murmuring, she passes with her burden from Muiraven's view into the adjoining apartment, whence he is made cognizant, without partaking of the nursery mysteries that ensue, and result in Master Tommy being tucked up very dry and warm and comfortable in bed, and apparently without any more injury than is conveyed by a strip of diachylon-plaster across his forehead.

It is nearly an hour before Irene appears again, and Muiraven cannot help thinking she has made her absence longer than was necessary. As she enters the sitting-room she looks pale, harassed, and weary. All her fire has departed, to be replaced by a nervous tremor that will hardly permit her to look him in the face.

He meets her, holding out his hand.

"At last, I suppose I may say, Mrs. Mordaunt, that I hope I see you well."

"I am afraid I must have appeared very rude," she stammers; "but the shock—the fright of this accident—"

"Pray don't think it necessary to apologize. I can make every allowance for your forgetfulness. It is fortunate I was on the spot."

"Then it was you! I have heard nothing, remember. I have had no time even to inquire."

"Oh, it was undoubtedly me. I was taking a constitutional along the Coeklebury high-road this morning, when I came upon the young rebel about to make an experiment in sliding. I shouted to him to stop; but it was no use. He would have his own way, so I had to go after him. It's lucky the water was not very deep nor the ice very strong, or I might not have fished him out in time. As it was, breaking the ice head-fore-

most stunned him; and had there not been help at hand, I don't suppose you would have seen the young gentleman again."

He speaks indifferently, as though the matter were not of much consequence to either of them; but she is trembling all over with gratitude.

"Oh, how can I thank you sufficiently!—how can I say all I feel at the child's recovery! I shall never forget it as long as I live." Then she remembers that the boy is his, and not hers, and blushes at what may seem presumption.

"You must be very thankful too," she adds, timidly.

"Oh, of course—of course," he says, turning away.

He is so bitterly disappointed at her reception of him. It seems as though she had forgotten every thing that has ever taken place between them. But it is coming back upon her now only too vividly.

"I—I—have not offered you any thing, Lord Muiraven," she says, glancing at the teapot and the toast-rack. "Have you breakfasted?"

"Yes—thanks."

"Won't you take another cup of tea or a glass of wine?"

"I don't care for wine so early; but, if I might venture to ask—if you have such a thing in the house as a little brandy?"

His teeth chatter as he speaks. She looks up quickly.

"Are you not well?"

"I feel slightly chilled—rather *damp* about the extremities, in fact."

She glances at his habiliments, and sees with horror that his trousers are soaked through up to the waist.

"Good Heavens! Lord Muiraven. How did that happen? Did you—you—fall in too?"

"Not exactly; but you can hardly expect a man to fish a child out of four feet of iced water and keep warm and dry at the same time."

"And I never thought to ask if you required any thing!"

Her face turns red with shame, and with a deeper feeling, that is half self-reproach and half anxiety lest he should come to harm through her neglect.

"Oh, never mind me," he answers, laconically. "I shall do well enough; and I didn't expect that you would think about it."

"Lord Muiraven, please don't say that. What can I do for you now? You ought not to remain in those wet clothes. I know it is very danger-