

how excited he is, and I so low that I can hardly walk!" These words gasped out with querulous intonation, as if the speaker were faint and ill-natured, came from Mrs. King, who in dishabille leaned against the door and made Mr. Tully's position untenable. As he stepped out of the shadow Mrs. King started violently, and exclaiming "I had no idea there were others here!" seized Jack and hurriedly left the room. Jack resisted at first, but an appealing look from his friend made him consent, though at the door he asked, "You'll come and read to me before dinner, won't you, Auntle Dell?"

"Yes, dear, very soon," she answered, and the door closed, leaving her alone with Stephen Tully and the dead. For a moment neither spoke, and then with a quiet smile Mr. Tully invited Dell to be seated by him on the cushioned recess of the window. She looked curiously at him as she sat down, and he answered her by gazing in her face for a moment and saying:

"Your repose and restful face are pleasant after the exhibition we've just had of that demented boy and his dishevelled mother. What a fright the widow looked! One could scarce imagine grief to have such a disastrous effect on beauty. But, perhaps it was because she hadn't her hair combed and had forgotten to put on part of her dress!" He spoke banteringly, and Dell watched his face with the same curious look with which she almost always regarded him.

"You forget, Mr. Tully, that both grief and neglect of dress are excusable in Mrs. King under the circumstances."

"No, I don't, Miss Reproof, and when Mrs. King discovered my presence she didn't forget her lack of comeliness any more than I did. But you always look well and cool. I really believe a tired man could stand on one foot for an hour in the hot sun and rest himself and grow cool and comfortable, simply by gazing on you. I do indeed, though you observe me with that 'wonder-if-I-can-believe-him' look."

"Please don't talk so heedlessly!" exclaimed Dell, drawing further away from him. "You frighten me with your lack of regard for what ordinarily restrains people. How can you joke and carry on over the corpse of a man who was your partner and friend—and more, Stephen Tully—your benefactor?"

"My dear Miss Browning, I am not joking, and I am not 'carry-ing-on,' except in the sense of trying to carry on a conversation, which you desire to be conducted on a funeral basis while I am endeavoring, by ordinary good humor, to prevent both of us from bursting into tears. Just one more word from you and my lachrymal fountains will gush forth and you will have as much trouble