

Thus, the household diminished by two, the week passed.

Dick Maxse, much afflicted by the fact that his wife, bereft of her daughter, now devoted more of her time to him than ever before, sought distraction in a mild flirtation with one of his nurses, a pretty young woman from St. Thomas's; Lord Yeoland had two bad days, and was better again; Pam took long walks in the late afternoons and passed the rest of her time with one or the other of her relatives; Pilgrim studied her Mistress with a humble zeal that sat oddly on her gaunt face.

One day Pam and Maxse had what the suffering ne'er-do-weel call a "naked-soul talk."

"But Miss Perry is pretty," he protested innocently, in reply to a vigorous expostulation from the girl.

"Of course she is pretty, but—oh well, Uncle Dick, for a man who says he is going to live only six months, you really are pretty horrid."

"Why am I horrid?" he persisted with one of his old graceless grins. "What on earth do I do?"

"Well, couldn't you possibly take your drops without kissing her hand?"

Pam, very erect in a high-backed chair, Caliban in her arms, looked at him seriously as she spoke, and he turned a little so that he could see her at his ease.

"Without kissing her hand? Well yes, if you put it in that way, I suppose I could, but then, why should I?"

"Don't you think it would be more dignified?"

He burst out laughing. "Dignified! My dear Amelia, can you imagine, in your wildest flights of imagination, Richard Allison Joyce Maxse, being dignified?"

"I can imagine him trying," she answered drily.

"Then you can do more than I can, my dear. Why look here, Pam, I'll be as dead as Queen Anne in six months' time, and they'll arrange me nicely in a coffin, with flowers and all that, and then what will happen? The 'dignity of death' as poets say, will turn away from me, and there won't be one bit of 'majesty' or 'peace' or any other of the usual nice things about me; I'll look just as I do now when I'm asleep—like a poor devil who has had his day,