

beside him with her arm round his neck, opposite him the minister's wife, her face calm and steady, Billy Jack standing at the foot of the bed—he and little Jessac the only ones in the room who were weeping—and there at the head, Thomas, supporting his mother, now and then moistening her lips and giving her sips of stimulant, and so quick and steady, gentle as a woman, and smiling through it all. I could hardly believe it was the same big fellow who three hours before had carried the ball through the Front defense. I tell you, sir, it was wonderful.

“There was no fuss or hysterical nonsense in that room. The mother lay there quite peaceful, pain all gone—and she had had enough of it in her day. She was quite a beautiful woman, too, in a way. Fine eyes, remarkable eyes, splendidly firm mouth, showing great nerve, I should say. All her life, I understand, she lived for others, and even now her thought was not of herself. When I came in she opened her eyes. They were like stars, actually shining, and her smile was like the sudden breaking of light through a cloud. She put out her hand for mine, and said—and I value these words, sir—‘Mr. Craven, I give you a mither’s thanks and a mither’s blessing for a’ you have done for ma laddie.’ She was Lowland Scotch,