

so—you have been up with me all night, and—good gracious!" becoming suddenly filled with compunction, "how coolly I have taken your great service!"

Her ladyship sat upright, flushed by a sudden impulse of gratitude.

"Who are your friends?" she asked, with a bright look.

"I have none." Lady Juliana. I am looking for some situation by which to be independent of friends."

"Oh, how fortunate for me! Would you like—but perhaps you are not qualified. Are you well educated? I think you are."

"I have been eight years at a boarding-school, my lady."

"Good gracious! I suppose you are as learned as Socrates. I never was at school in all my life! I was kept with Aunt Faulconcourt and beasts of governesses. But here comes papa."

The marquis re-entered with a bow, the consolidation of courtly etiquette.

"Papa, I was too stupid before to introduce you to Miss Blair. She is the young lady who saved my life. I wish to do something for her."

His lordship advanced and held out two fingers.

"How can I most suitably thank Miss Blair for her services to my daughter?"

"Papa," interposed Lady Juliana, seeing Margaret stand pale and embarrassed before her pseudo-patron, "may she come to Hautville Park instead of Madam Beneant, whom I am so tired of? She would be a more suitable companion than that chattering widow—I am so sick of her flirtations! And I am sure I should be perfectly happy with the generous creature who saved my life."

"Shall you consider her ladyship's proposal?" asked the marquis, turning again to Margaret. "Madam Beneant has been my daughter's companion for a year and a half, but she is too old. Her salary was two hundred a year. You shall have two hundred and fifty if you decide to come. What do you say?"

She stood wavering between conflicting impulses. She longed to go with this dove-like creature whom she had saved from death; her heart clung to her—how could she leave her? But again, would she be concealed from the terrible St. Udo Brand's possible persecutions at the Marquis of Ducie's residence?

Who would think to look for her in Lady Juliana's companion? Her heart pleaded, "Stay—oh, stay!"

So, all blinded to the future stealing surely on, Margaret flung herself back into the whirlpool which, gradually circling inward,

would inevitably bring her face to face with that which she most dreaded.

"I will go with you, Lady Juliana," she said.

When the bricklayer came home to dinner he found the grand people all gone, after showing but meager gratitude for his kindness.

Hautville Park was near Lambeth, within pleasant distance of London; and in due time, in the dying crimson of departed sunlight, the carriage arrived at its stately gates, and Margaret found herself introduced as companion to its spotless mistress, Lady Juliana Ducie.

She had not been there more than three weeks, when one day the maid brought in a letter to my lady's boudoir. My lady was lying *a la* convalescent on her sofa, and Margaret was reading to her. My lady had taken her time to get over her railway fright, and had taxed her companion's strength considerably, by her exactions, but she professed herself very fond of Miss Blair for all her trouble, and they agreed excellently together thus far.

"Hand me that letter, Bignetta. No, give it to Miss Blair and go away, she can read it to me."

Margaret took the letter, inserted her finger to break the seal; glanced at the seal, and withdrew her finger as if it had been stung, glanced at the writing, and slowly became stern and pale.

"Why don't you open it and read its contents?" cried my lady. "Are you tired of reading all the condolence that comes to me, or do you think it is some insolent bill?"

"Lady Juliana," said Margaret, "I cannot read this letter. I—I know the writer."

She covered her face with her hands.

"Why, what can you mean?" exclaimed my lady, getting upon her elbows to possess herself of the letter, and to look curiously at her companion. "Who is it?"

She looked at her own name on the back, and gave a delighted cry.

"Captain Brand! So he deigns to remember me at last! Ah, won't I make him suffer, for being so derelict in his duty these last three weeks! Careless creature! he never thinks of me, except when he sees me."

She laid down the letter and returned to the charge.

"How came you, Miss Blair, to be so well informed about Captain Brand's writing?" she demanded.

Margaret was eyeing her in speechless consternation.

She had thought at first that this missive