

"He never spoke a word arter we lifted him up. He couldn't ha' suffered any, Mis' Kinney."

"Praps, Mis' Kinney, it'd be a good plan to ondo his clothes afore the doctor gits here," came in confused and trembling tones from one after another of the men who stood almost paralyzed in presence of Draxy's terrible silence.

"O Mis' Kinney, jest speak a word, can't ye? O she'll die if she don't. Where's Reuby? I'll fetch him," exclaimed Ike, and left the room; the men followed him irresolutely, looking back at Draxy, who still stood motionless, gazing down into the Elder's face.

"Do not look for Reuby—he has hid," came in a slow, measured whisper from her lips. "And leave me alone. Yes, I know. You need not be afraid. I understand that Mr. Kinney is dead," she added, as the men hesitated and looked bewildered in her face. "I will stay alone with him till the doctor comes," and Draxy gently closed the door and locked it. In a short time the little hall and door-yard were crowded with sobbing men and women. There was little to be told, but that little was told over and over. The Elder had walked down to the village store with old Ike, and had just given him some parcels to carry home, saying, "Tell Mrs. Kinney,"—when a runaway horse had come dashing furiously down the street, drawing a waggon in which clung, rather than sat, a woman holding a baby in her arms. The Elder had sprung into the middle of the road, and caught the horse by the bridle as he swerved a little to one side; but the horse was too strong and too much frightened to be held by any man's strength. Rearing high, he had freed his head, and plunging forward had knocked the Elder down in such a way that both waggon-wheels had run over his neck, breaking it instantly.

That Draxy should be all this time alone with her husband's body seemed dreadful to these sympathizing, simple-hearted people. No sound came from the room, though the windows were all wide open.

"O Mr. Miller! don't ye think some on us had better try to git in to her," said the women; "she don't make no noise."

"No," replied Reuben, feebly. He, too, was prostrated like Ike, by the fearful blow, and looked years older within the hour. "No," Draxy knows what's best for her. She's spoke to me once through the door. She hasn't fainted."

"When the doctor came, Reuben called to Draxy:—

"Daughter, the doctor's come."

The door opened instantly, but closed as soon as the doctor had entered. In a few moments it opened again, and the doctor handed a slip of paper to Reuben. He unfolded it and read it aloud:—

"Father, dear, please thank all the people for me, and ask them to go home now. There is nothing they can do. Tell them it grieves me to hear them cry, and Mr. Kinney would not wish it."

Slowly and reluctantly the people went, and a silence sadder