

remorse so unstable that it could not overlive the pain of a sword-scratch on the forehead. And all the evil of a wicked heart was in the half-grin and the blood-smeared eye and the set jaw of Sir Oliver as he turned again to his work in earnest.

But not to triumph at once. Not till the fifteen or twenty years there is between him and his opponent begins to tell in his favour. Then, as he becomes aware that the sword that opposes him is fainter in its resolution, that the breath comes shorter and shorter still of the man who wields it, the growing fierceness of his own attack follows him remorselessly as he falls back, and ends the long encounter with a thrust.

He who receives it is wounded to death. The surgeon who is waiting with the cart can do nothing—no surgeon can—to stop the blood that is welling out inside the shirt he cuts with scissors to detach it. All the lint the world can supply would be useless there. But on no account move or raise him yet.

He is trying to speak, and his second kneels beside him, puts his ear down to catch the faint words. "He asks to speak to Sir Oliver Raydon," is the report. His murderer then kneels, and the words he stoops down to hear are: "Oliver Raydon, I leave you to God and your conscience."

Then the father of the woman who is sleeping through it all is dead; and the dead face tells the bystanders that this man was older than they thought him. For the serenity of his strength and confidence, and the flush of strong health, had made him seem no unfit opponent for his slayer. What will the woman say?

What tale can be told to the woman? Which of the three who can tell it will be the teller? The sound of their horses on the turf dies soon, and now nothing is left but to carry the dead man home.