

Patience Sparhawk and Her Times 487

Her sensitised mind received the immediate impression that the atmosphere of the room was vibrating with excitement. She saw the head-keeper's neck crane, his furtive glance at the outer door. He expected some one. Bourke !

She set her teeth. She had believed up to last night that he would save her. Why had she doubted him for an instant? She understood now the diplomacy of the head-keeper. Why had she not spoken when he had implored her?

It seemed to her that the men fastening the straps were racing each other. She wanted to whisper to them to lag, but pride stayed her tongue.

The warden was striding about and swearing. The electricians and surgeons were whispering in a group.

She looked at the newspaper men. She met their gaze of excited sympathy, understood at last the spirit that animated them, and bowed her head. She dared not speak.

But in a moment indignation routed gratitude. Why did they not rescue her, these young vigorous men ! They knew her to be innocent. They outmatched in number the guards. Where was their manhood? What had become of all the old traditions? Then her anger left as suddenly as it had come. They were not knights with battle axes, but the most exaggerated product of modern civilisation. It was almost a miracle that they passionately wished to save her.

Her head was drawn gently back, her eyes covered. Something leapt and fought within her. Horror tore at her vitals, snarling like a wolf-hound. But once more her will rose supreme. Then, as she realised that her last moment had come, she became possessed by one