

ly seemed to hear the bravely gladden-
ing words—"what does this mean that
Steven said?"

"You do not believe it?" Derry's
eyes were flashing with a strange de-
light, yet she could not acknowledge her
own disbelief, for fear of throwing Prim-
rose back into an old sorrow.

"No. It is impossible. Steven was
different from most men; a stern, soli-
tary man with odd opinions; but not the
man who could ever—even in a passion—
have done that. Some men could in a
passion, you know, Derry; they could
indeed, and not with the same sin. Though
he is dead, and it may never be
explained, nothing in the world could
make me believe Steven did that deed."

A curious, aching sympathy fell upon
Derry's heart, in spite of these words
being the utterance of her own thoughts;
for she knew that Primrose, thinking
thus, must feel the shadow under which
she had lately lived to be heavier in-
stead of lifted.

"We will think of this later," she
said, bravely, as she put Primrose to
sit beside the little tea-table on the
hearth, and set herself a chair close to
her friend.

And so they sat and talked of other
things until Derry could not make the
meal last any longer, when, seeing Prim-
rose fall into a long thought, she went
to the piano, and began to play, just to
make her friend feel herself unobserved
and at perfect liberty to be silent.

"Oh, thank you, Derry," cried Prim-
rose, impulsively, in the joy of hearing
music once again. And she rose and
stood at the glass-door, looking out into
the gathering darkness.

Half an hour afterward, just as Derry
was going to leave the piano, a sudden
thought occurred to her. "Primrose,"
she began, without looking round, "can
you tell me what this melody is? I
have had it in my head for days, and
yet I don't know what it is. Not that
it is remarkable, because I know so
little about music. I never was like you,
or even Ella. I don't suppose I shall
properly know it, but I will try. Listen,
will you? and tell me if you know it."

As Primrose did not speak when the
tune was over, Derry played it through
a second time, then, turning to ask what
it was, started to find her companion

standing close behind her, her face as
pale as death, her eyes feverishly bright,
while her trembling hands were locked
together.

"Where—did you hear that?" she
asked, breathlessly.

"What is it? I do so want to find
out," returned Derry, speaking lightly
to hide her great astonishment, even
her alarm. "Pretty, is it not, though so
sorrowful? You are such a musician,
Primrose, that I felt sure you could tell
me."

"Where did you hear it? Was it—
from Steven?"

"No, no. I am certain," said Derry,
angry with herself that her cheeks
should burn at the question. "Why do
you ask?"

"Was it from—Oliver?"

"Oh, no" (readily enough, yet with
an unconscious haughtiness in the
prompt tones). "If it had been from
your brother Oliver, I should never have
remembered it, as it is so long since I
saw him."

"You are sure? Quite sure?"

"Sure. Quite sure," replied Derry,
with honest warmth. "As sure as ever
a person could—Oh, Primrose, what is
the matter?"

"Nothing," said Primrose, leaning
heavily against the instrument, "only I
could have believed at that moment
that it is possible to die of sudden joy.
Derry, you mean it? That Oliver
never—"

"My dear," interrupted Derry, in deep
earnestness, "I know your brother very
little, and I have never heard him play
or sing a note. Never."

"Oh, Father in Heaven! forgive me
that I ever thought it possible."

"Primrose, why do you want to know
where I heard this air? It is beautiful,
but does not it make you think, just at
first, of a bar or two in one of Schubert's
symphonies? Oh, my dear!" for Prim-
rose Basset, with her head upon the
piano, was crying as if her heart would
break. But Derry seemed to know that
though these were the first tears she
had shed since her brother's murder,
they were not tears of distress, and so
she let them have their way, leading
Primrose to a couch and putting an arm
round her in silence.

"Derry, I have frightened you," said