

an unknown world wherein there was nothing like unto life, save the martial music with which that world seemed full.

Presently she came back again to clearer thoughts. There was a stout lady at the window blind yonder, and she had drawn it aside to peep into the garden, or the street, or whatever lay beyond that white strip of calico with the ivy-leaf pattern, which had worried her to death's door, it had had so many faces grinning from the leaves at her.

"What is the time?" asked Mabel, in so clear and loud a voice, that the lady gave a little jump, dropped the blind, and came rapidly towards the bedside, radiant with smiles.

"My poor girl, I am so glad to hear you speak again in this way."

"What is the time?" asked Mabel, pertinaciously.

"It is half-past eight, my child. Do you know me?"

And the broad, good-tempered face of the lady was lowered very close to the coverlet.

"Yes," said Mabel, confidently.

"Who am I, then? What is my name?"

The grotesque approaches closely to the grim, and there are the elements of the ridiculous even in brain-fever.

"Mrs. Codfish," answered Mabel confidently.

"Oh! good gracious, no," exclaimed the lady; "not Codfish, dear, but Salmon."

"Oh, yes, Salmon," said Mabel, dreamily regarding her, "that is the name—I know now. Where am I, did you say?"

"At the Inn at Datchet Bridge, at the foot of the Downs."

"The Downs—ah, yes."

"And you are so much better to-day. The doctor said you would be if you had a quiet night," said Mrs. Salmon.

"Where is——"

Here Mabel paused and looked ahead of her, and tried to recollect another name.

"Angelo?" suggested Mrs. Salmon.

"No. The man with the pale face and long black hair."

"Mr. Brian Halfday?"

"Yes, yes; that is the one. Where is he?"

"He was here last night inquiring about you; he will be here to-night again, I dare say," was the reply.

"Please don't let me see him," said Mabel, shuddering.

"Certainly not, my dear—it is the last thing I should think of allowing."

"I am very much afraid of him, you know."

"You should not be, Mabel," replied Mrs. Salmon; "there is nothing to be afraid of. He has been very constant in his inquiries, and has done everything that——"

"Where's Dorcas?"

"His sister?"

"Yes."

"In the next room."

"I should like to see her," said Mabel.

"I have been thinking a great deal of that child, left alone in the world as she is. Left completely alone! Call her for me please."

"Ahem!" said Mrs. Salmon, "she has been sitting up with you all night, and yesterday and the night before, and would not let anybody come near you, and I have only just persuaded her to let me take her place."

"Poor Dorcas," said Mabel; "why did she want to nurse me?"

"I can't tell. She has been almost insolent when anybody—but there, there, I will say nothing against her," cried Mrs. Salmon; "a better nurse you could not have had, Miss Westbrook."

"Don't wake her," murmured Mabel; "let her sleep."

"And now if you will sleep a little, or rest a little without talking any more, you will get strong more quickly," was the good advice proffered at this juncture.

"I will try," said Mabel; "but I do not think I shall ever be strong again. I am so weak, so like a little child."

"Patience, Mabel; you are young, and these are early days."

"How long have I been ill?"

"Three days."

"So long as that," said Mabel, dreamily; "what was it that——"

"Here, my child, take this," said Mrs. Salmon, adroitly distracting attention with something in a tea-cup; "you want to eat and drink now as often as you can, and the roses will soon be back upon your cheeks. Here, take this, and then rest a little while again."

"Till Dorcas comes?"

"Why, yes—till Dorcas comes."

"I seem to miss her," Mabel murmured.

"I feel now that she has been my nurse,