

of natural feeling for others was allowed to escape her; only her hands, which lay quietly clasped together in her lap, gradually tightened and contracted till the pressure of her slight fingers was like that of iron.

At last she was released; and exhausted as if with hard physical exertion, she came back to the Cottage with her news.

There was no need to tell it. The hopeless look which, when she dared be natural, settled in her eyes, told plainly enough that there was no mistake of identity. Only one hope remained, and that so feeble that neither dared to acknowledge it in her heart, though she might speak of it as existing—the hope that after all the prisoner might be innocent.

Mrs. Costello wrote that day to her faithful friend and counsellor, Mr. Strafford.

“I am in a terrible strait,” she said, “and it is to you only in this world that I can look for aid. My whole life, as you know, has been given to my daughter—for her I have thought and planned, and in her I have had my daily consolation. But now I begin to remember that I am not a mother only, but also a wife. Have I a right to forget it? Can