

"No; if thou wilt but control thyself, thou mayest see her for a little while; there'll be a change soon."

The man of healing had done and said his best, but that was bad enough. He had tried to comfort, but the exigencies were beyond human powers. "A change soon!"

Hard, mocking words. Apology for bad news! Stepping-stone to saying the worst is at hand; words so often used by the man of healing when his art is defeated! How like a funeral knell breaking the heart has come, again and again, to tingling ears those terrible sounds: "In—a—little—while—there'll—be—a—change!" Cornelius felt all their stunning force, and was instantly by the side of Miriamne. What a change met his hungry eyes! The fever had died away; fever, that blast from the shores of Death's ocean, had passed, because there was nothing longer for it to attack. The tide was ebbing. She lay silent, pale, and haggard; motionless, except as to a feeble breathing. The husband would have encircled her with his arms. It was love's impulse, but science, the men of healing, restrained him. There was a little wail just then, and he glanced around with a look of joy. The nurse had brought the babe close to him, turning away her own face to hide her tears, but holding the little one out as if trying to say: "This shall compensate." Then again the grief-stricken man turned to the physicians and whispered, in a half-fierce, half-terrified way: "She'll live—she'll be better now."

The aged man, slowly adjusting the paraphernalia of his profession preparatory to departure, replied: "Few survive the Cæsarean section. It was a dire necessity."

"Lord, behold whom Thou lovest is sick," moaned the young chaplain, as he knelt by the couch and buried his face in its disordered covering. So the tide of life ebbed at midnight, leaving a stranded wreck at Bethany, and the Christmas chimes turned to dirges.

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