

to attend to my off horse, surprised to find my hands trembling and my eyes full of tears. Back upon the steps stood an old gentleman, with white hair and flowing beard, handsome, straight, and stately—Graeme's father, waiting his turn.

'Welcome home, my lad,' was his greeting, as he kissed his son, and the tremor of his voice, and the sight of the two men kissing each other, like women, sent me again to my horses' heads.

'There's Connor, mother!' shouted out Graeme, and the dainty little lady, in her black silk and white lace, came out to me quickly, with outstretched hands.

'You, too, are welcome home,' she said, and kissed me.

I stood with my hat off, saying something about being glad to come, but wishing that I could get away before I should make quite a fool of myself. For as I looked down upon that beautiful face, pale, except for a faint flush upon each faded cheek, and read the story of pain endured and conquered, and as I thought of all the long years of waiting and of vain hoping, I found my throat dry and sore, and the words would not come. But her quick sense needed no words, and she came to my help.