

depending on him to help to shoot his own partridges on the morrow. But the afternoon passed, and Jos did not come. The next day passed, and still no Jos. And no letter or telegram. His father and mother were silently uneasy. They said, no doubt he had been persuaded to stay on where he was, and had forgotten the shoot at home. Mary said, "No doubt," but a reasonless fear gathered like thin mist across her heart. Where was he? The letters that had been forwarded to his last address all came back. A week passed, and still no Jos, and no answers to autocratic telegrams.

Then suddenly Jos telegraphed from London saying he should return early that afternoon, and asking to be met at the station.

When the time drew near Mary established herself with a book in the rose-garden. He would come to her there as he had so often done before. The roses were well nigh over, but in their place the sweet white faces of the Japanese anemones were crowding up round the old grey sundial. The sunny windless air was full of the cawing of rooks. It was the time and the place where a desultory love might come by chance, and linger awhile, not where a desperate love, brought to bay, would wage one of his pitched battles. Peace and rest were close at hand. Why had she been fearful? Surely all was well, and he was coming back. He was coming back.

She waited as it seemed to her for hours before she heard the faint sound of his dog-cart. She should see him in a moment. He would speak to his parents, and then ask where she was, and come out to her. Oh! how she loved him; but she must appear calm, and not too glad to see him. She heard his step—strong, light, alert, as it used to be of old, not the slow, dragging, aimless step of the last two months.

He came quickly round the yew hedge and stood before her. She raised her eyes slowly from her book to meet his, a smile parting her lips.