

away cousin only ; but ever since his babyhood he had addressed her by that title.

"I sent for you," she said at last, speaking jerkily and hurriedly, as if the effort were almost more than she could bear—"I sent for you to tell the General what you yourself telegraphed to me last night."

A flush of dull red color stole into the young man's face. He looked at her intently, with a contracted brow.

"Do you mean," he said, after a moment's pause, "that you have not told him yet?"

Miss Vane averted her eyes.

"No," she answered ; "I have-not told him. You will think me weak—I suppose I am weak, Hubert—but I dared not tell him."

"And you summoned me from London to break the news? For no other reason?"

Miss Vane nodded,—"That was all."

Hubert bit his lip and sipped his coffee before saying another word.

"Aunt Leo," he said, after a silence during which Miss Vane gave unequivocal signs of nervousness, "I really must say that I think the proceeding was unnecessary." He leaned back in his chair and toyed with his spoon, a whiteness which Miss Vane was accustomed to interpret as a sign of anger showing itself about his nostrils and his lips. She had long looked upon it as an ominous sign.

"Hubert, Hubert, don't be angry—don't refuse to help me!" she said, in pleading tones, such as he had never heard from her before. "I assure you that my post in this house is no sinecure. Poor Marion"—she spoke of Mrs. Sydney Vane—"is rapidly sinking into her grave. Ay, you may well start! She has never got over the shock of Sydney's death, and the excitement of the last few days seems to have increased her malady. She insisted on having every report of the trial read to her; and ever since the conviction she has grown weaker, until the doctor says that she can hardly outlast the week. Oh, that wicked man—that murderer—has much to answer for!" said Miss Vane, clasping her hands passionately together.

Hubert was silent; his eyebrows were drawn down over his eyes, his face was strangely white.

"Your uncle," Miss Vane continued sadly, "is nearly heart-broken. You know how much he loved poor Sydney,