

I tell you. My feet are bleeding and blistered, my arms ache with the weight of this child, and my head is throbbing until I am blind with pain. For God's sake, stop at Leamington to-night—we will reach Plymouth before the ship sails to-morrow."

The man's answer was a brutal blow. He turned round upon the frail creature beside him, with a volley of blood-curdling oaths, and struck her full in the face.

"I told you I'd do it," he said, with a wolfish glare in his greenish-black eyes; "*now*, will you stop your whimpering, mistress? You used to be proud of that pretty face of yours. Look in the glass to-morrow, and see if you'll be proud of it any more. Come on, and hold your infernal clack, or I'll smash every bone in your body, by —!"

The woman had staggered blindly back, the blood spurting from a deep cut between the eyes, but she did not fall. She put up one hand and wiped away the flowing blood, then, without a single word, resumed her walk after him.

"Oh, we take it quiet, do we!" the man said, with a backward growl; "a little blood-letting settles some people wonderfully. Now, come, and let's have no more jaw about stopping at Leamington. I'll stop where I see fit and when I see proper—not before. Come on faster, and be hanged to you!"

The woman wore a deep sun-hood of the poorest and plainest kind, but it effectually shaded her face. That face had turned of a dull, leaden white, where the blood did not horribly disfigure it, and the light in the swollen and discolored eyes was a light that might have made that reckless man tremble.

It was still early in the night, between nine and ten. The road was long and lonely, and far and faint in the distance twinkled the lights of Leamington village, athwart the purplish haze. The sky, bending down on the tree-tops, was overcast and menacing. The moon rent her way up through piles of jagged cloud, and what wind there was sighed with an unearthly, eerie moan up from the sea. Wild weather was near—wild weather for this wretched trio, for weary days and nights on the tramp.

Dead silence fell between them now. The woman's lips were compressed, as though she never meant to open them again, and the eyes, dull and lifeless before, blazed up with terrible fire. The blow, that might have beaten out all her feeble remaining strength, had goaded her on with a fierce desperation born of vindictive hatred and despair. In dead