

"Oh! it was my chap's fault entirely. He simply barged into the other car. I yelled to him to turn to the left, but the idiot went bang on. Poor chap! He got knocked about a bit. I had to take him to the hospital first—that is where I had my hand dressed."

"When was it?" asked Olivia Mary.

"Just about five o'clock."

She dried the hand and then she began winding the soft linen round it.

Her son watched her almost curiously. It was strange to him to see her being so useful, going about a task which had a certain ugliness about it so composedly. It amazed him that her two small hands which he had always admired and always considered so useless could do such work as this.

When she had put the last stitch in she emptied the basin and tidied away the disorder, and her son watched her in the same curious way all the time. Suddenly he said:

"Thanks so much . . . it feels tons better . . . I hope I shall get to sleep now, only I'm so jolly thirsty." His mother just looked at him.

"I wonder . . . would you like a cup of tea?"

He paused an instant and then he nodded his head.

"My throat's awfully dry, I have got a fearful head. Tea sounds like the one thing; but look here, can't I help you?"

"Oh! no, no; sit still." She gave him a faint smile. "I very often make tea for myself in the early morning hours. It is something to do. One gets so tired of lying awake. Payne has brought some biscuits up here too, I know."

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