

him repeat his heavy knock. To her astonishment he came back again with double speed. Mr. West was sitting up with a dying patient, and his assistant was not at home.

The fact was, Frederick Bond had said nothing to his partner about expecting to be out that evening, and, therefore, no provision had been made for supplying his place.

"Go, instantly, to Sir James Mornford's for your master," said Eleanor, "it is but half a mile."

The man looked inquiringly, but said nothing. She repeated her command, and he went down stairs, muttering all the way, that it would be of no sort of use, for that by this time, his master would be more likely to kill a child, than cure it; but he went, nevertheless, and, in about half an hour Sir James Mornford's carriage drove up to the door, and a mass of something scarcely like humanity was lifted into the hall.

Eleanor hastened to explain to her husband the necessity there was for his instantly preparing to accompany the farmer, who now insisted, in no gentle terms, that his summons should be promptly obeyed. But the look of gross stupidity, and the idiotic laugh with which Frederick Bond responded to his wife, convinced her that she had failed to reach his understanding, and she patiently began the task of explanation a second time, though with less hope of success.

"My dear Frederick," she said, leading him by the arm into an apartment where they could converse unheard, for she saw that the footman was making merry at his master's expense. "My own dear Frederick, I entreat you to listen to me. Tell me first, what is good for a child in the croup, and I will send this man away before he wakes all the neighbours."

"A child in the croup?" said the doctor, drawing as if he had lost all command over the muscles of his mouth. "Put him in a warm bath; and, Eleanor," he added, calling back his wife after she had reached the door, "see—see—that they don't boil him—that's all."

Eleanor went out into the street, and advancing meekly to the side of the impatient farmer, told him, that her husband was not quite ready: that he strongly recommended a warm bath for the child, and that the best thing he could do, was to ride home and see that the remedy was administered, while Mr. Bond would prepare to follow immediately.

"Warm bath, or no warm bath," said the farmer. "I don't stir from this place, without a doctor of some kind with me. It is not as if we were parish paupers, and bound to one man, like those who can't pay their own way; but, if Mr. Bond does not choose to come, I know those who will."

In short, the man was altogether impracticable, and Eleanor had no other alternative, but to return to the house, from whence she despatched the servant to prepare his master's horse and gig, in the shortest possible space of time; while she took down his hat and coat, and would gladly have assisted him to put them on, but that he held her hand so tightly, she could only stand still and hear all the foolish things he chose to utter. It was like a waking night-mare to poor Eleanor; for the farmer, at intervals, was thundering more and more loudly at the door, and the neighbours were beginning to open their shutters and look out, while she had no power to release herself, or in any way to ameliorate the sufferings of her situation.

At last the servant, having driven up to the door with the gig, came in to her assistance. Their joint efforts, however, could not, for some time, induce the doctor to put his coat on the right way. He persisted in pushing in his arms with the front behind; and, in this manner assuming all the mock majesty he could, he staggered up and down the hall, arguing that it was the most rational and approved method of preserving the chest from cold.

Eleanor had hitherto kept her patience, and spoken kindly; but piqued with the merriment of Saunders, who was enjoying the jest to his heart's content, she adopted a different tone. "Fredrick," she said, "if you will compel me to despise you, spare me, at least, the pain of seeing you despised by your own servants."

These words succeeded in awakening some degree of feeling. With no other answer than a grimace, the doctor, by many zig-zag movements, succeeded in reaching the door; and was finally assisted by Saunders to his accustomed place in the carriage, where he soon fell into a heavy sleep, from which, had the way been shorter, it would have been impossible to arouse him at the necessary time for action. Happily for his credit, they had to ride seven long miles, so that by the time the farmer opened for them the last gate, Saunders was able to recognise some signs of life in the slumbering form beside him; and he effected his own, and his

master's descent from the carriage, without any observations being made upon his real situation.

Perhaps it was that the simple inmates of the rural dwelling were too much occupied with their own feelings, to make observations upon others. The child was dead, and while the neighbouring gossips were adjusting the bed on which it lay, pressing down the eyelids, and straightening the little hands that were never more to be stretched forth with the eager grasp of impatient youth, the mother sat rocking herself to and fro before the fire, taking no notice of any one, but occasionally wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron, and then folding it silently before her face, until some fresh spring of sorrow should be opened, and her tears should flow more abundantly again.

The only thing which roused her attention, was the sound of her husband's step in the outer apartment. She rose to meet him, and throwing her arms around his neck, wept more bitterly than ever.

"Stand off!" said the farmer, pushing away the woman who crowded about him; and bent only upon ascertaining one fact, he added, "One of you speak at once, and tell me exactly at what time it was all over."

"Not half an hour after you were gone," said three voices together.

"It is well," he replied, while quietly approaching the bed, and laying his broad hand upon the silky hair of his child, as gently as if it had been a butterfly alighting on a rose, he stooped down, and murmured in broken accents, "My pretty fellow—it is indeed all over with thee." Then standing erect, he added, "It is well for me that I am not put upon my revenge, as I should have been, had he died through that man's delay, for I would have blazoned it through the country, so that he should never have had a patient again."

On arriving at the farmer's door, Frederick Bond had been so far restored to consciousness, as to be able to go through the usual forms of civility or duty expected from a doctor on such occasions, without betraying any decided symptoms of alienation of mind; and thanks to the care of his wife and servant, he was so muffled in capes and cravats, that the expression of his countenance would not have been easily detected, even by more scrutinizing eyes than those around him. The farmer, it is true, regarded him with no very charitable feeling; but it was only on the score of neglect, that his wrath had been moved; and as that neglect was proved to have been of no importance to the life of his child, he offered him the usual civilities of his house, merely observing, as he followed him to the door, that it was well to look sharply to such matters; and that there was as good practice to be lost or won in that neighbourhood, as any doctor need desire.

Frederick Bond awoke at a late hour on the following morning, with more distinct recollections of the transactions of the past night, than he had any desire to retain. He descended to the breakfast-room nervous and irritable; and when he met the inquiring eye of his wife, he felt as if he would have given all he had in the world, to bribe her not to ask him a single question.—Her kindness too annoyed him. Her presence, her very existence, was at that moment a burden. And yet she spoke as sweetly, and was as solicitous to please him as ever. All her endeavours, however, were unequal to draw him into any thing like connected conversation, especially on the subject of the farmer's child. At last her curiosity overcame her prudence, and she ventured to ask directly, whether the child was living when he arrived.

"No," was the laconic reply.

Eleanor laid down her knife and fork, and gazing intently on her husband, exclaimed involuntarily, "What a pity you were so long in going!"

"It was no pity at all," said her husband, "and, besides, I was not long in going. The child would have been dead if I had flown. It did not live half an hour after the man had left his own house."

"Let us thank God!" said Eleanor, laying her hand upon her husband's arm. "Let us return thanks, that it was not through your neglect this life was lost; and let this merciful and timely warning be a caution to you, dear Frederick, for the future."

"Nonsense!" said her husband, shaking off the hand which pressed too earnestly upon his arm. "Give me another cup of coffee, and don't talk about what it is not your business to understand."

Eleanor had never been so ungraciously repulsed by her husband before. She felt that burning tears were in her eyes, but instead of yielding to her feelings, she silently formed a deep and fatal resolution, that this should be the last time she would eve