

available. He had found time to shave and change his clothes, but I have never seen a man more utterly exhausted.

"Is there any news?" Bertrand asked.

"She's doing—very fairly, I think," he answered with a drawl that was almost a stammer. "The effect—drug, you know—wearing off. She woke up—for a few moments. Now getting some natural sleep."

I put a stiff dash of brandy into the water and watched O'Rane's grey cheeks colouring.

"Did she seem comfortable?" I enquired.

"Comfortable?" he repeated with a laugh. "The physical *relief*, you know. . . . Whatever happens now, she's free from pain, she's bound to feel better and better. . . . When I was wounded, there were times when I thought I couldn't bear it; the nurses told me that I said quite clearly, 'It's *no* use hurting me any more; I *can't* stand it.' Dear souls! as if *they* could help it! And one *did* stand it. . . . But, when the pain began to abate, when you didn't have to keep yourself braced up against it, I went as limp as a rag. It was like the end of a long fever. . . . After that, whether I was asleep or awake, I always knew that the real hell was over. There might be little twinges in unexpected places, but the pain was *over, over*. And the feeling of weakness was so delicious! Like an endless repetition of the glorious moment when you're just dropping off to sleep. . . . That's how Sonia is now."

The next report came after dinner, when the doctor had concluded his evening visit and she had been put to sleep for the night.

"She's had a frightful time," he told us, "and there's always the possibility of a relapse, but I know she's not going to relapse, I'm not going to let her."

"And the child?"

"Oh, he's all right."

The next morning O'Rane joined me at breakfast after a night's unbroken rest. Despite a mild protest from the nurse, he had insisted on staying in Sonia's room and had