

A TERRIBLE SECRET.

frat thing to-morrow morning and take her away."

"Take her away!" Lady Helena repeated, setting her lips; "take her where, Victor? To you?"

His ghastly face turned a shade ghastlier. He caught his breath and grasped the back of the chair as though a stream of unendurable agony had pierced his heart. In an instant his aunt's arms were about him, tears streaming down her cheeks, her imploring eyes lifted to his.

"Forgive me, Victor, forgive me, I ought not to have asked you that. But I did not mean—I know that can never be, my poor boy. I will do whatever you say. I will go to her, of course—I will fetch her here if she will come."

"If she will come!" he repeated hoarsely, disengaging himself from her; "what do you mean by it? There can be no 'if' in this matter. She is my wife—she is Lady Catheron—do you think she is to be left penniless and alone drugging for the bread she eats? I tell you, you must bring her, she must come!"

His passionate, suppressed excitement terrified her. In pain and fear and helplessness she looked at her niece. Inez, with that steady self-possession that is born of long and great endurance, came to her rescue at once.

"Sit down, Victor!" her full, firm tones said, "and don't work yourself up to this pitch of nervous excitement. It's folly and a sick-bed. About your wife, Aunt Helena will do what she can, but what can she do? You have a martyr—she is an unutterably painful to speak of this, but under the circumstances we must. She refused with scorn everything you offered her before; unless these past few months have greatly altered her, she will refuse again. She seems to have been a very proud, high-spirited girl, but her hard struggle with the world may have beaten down that—and—"

"Don't!" he cried passionately; "I can't bear it. O my God! to think what I have done—what I have done to her! I have made her a martyr—she must think of me—and that I live to bear it! To think I have endured it all, when a pistol-ball would have ended my torments any day!"

"When you talk such wicked folly as that," said Inez Catheron, her strong, steady eyes fixed upon his face, "I have no more to say to you. You did your duty once, and you did it like a hero, like a martyr—seems a pity to spoil it all by such a cowardly rant as this."

"My duty?" he exclaimed, huskily. "Was it my duty? Should I doubt it; sometimes I think if I had never left her, all might have been well. Was it my duty to make my life a hell on earth, or tear my heart from my bosom, as I did in the hour I left her, to spoil her life for her, to bring shame, reproach, and poverty upon her? If I had not left her, could the worst that might have happened be any worse than that?"

"Much worse—infinite worse. You are the sufferer, believe me, not she. What is all she has undergone in comparison with what you have endured? And she will know all, and love and honor you as you deserve."

He hid his face in his hands, and turned away from the light. "One day," he heard him murmur; "one day—the day of my death. Pray Heaven it may be soon."

"I think," Inez said and speak instead of Aunt Helena. She has undergone so much—she isn't able, believe me, Victor, to undergo more. Let me go to your wife; all Aunt Helena can say, all she can urge, I will. If it be in human power to bring her back, I will bring her. All I dare tell her, I will tell. But, after all, it is so little, and she is so proud. Don't hope too much."

"It is, and she is," he murmured again, his face still hidden; "so little, and there is so much to tell. Oh!" he broke forth, with a passionate cry, "I can't bear this much longer. If she will come for nothing else, she will come for the truth, and the truth shall be told. What are a thousand promises to the living or the dead to me? The knowledge that she lives and scorns me!"

They said nothing to him—they knew it was useless—they knew his paroxysms would pass, as so many others had passed, and that by to-morrow he would be the last to wish to tell.

"You will surely not think of returning to St. James Street to-night?" said Inez by way of diversion. "You will remain here, and at the earliest possible hour to-morrow will drive me to Oxford Street. I will do all I can—you believe that, my cousin, I now. And if—if I am successful, will you be so kind as to look at him—will you meet her, Victor?"

"I don't know yet; my head is in a whirl. To-night I feel as though I could do anything; brave anything—to-morrow I suppose I will feel differently. Don't ask me what I will do to-morrow until to-morrow comes. I will remain all night, and I will go to my room at once; I feel dazed and half sick. Good-night."

He left them abruptly. They heard him toll wearily up to his room and lock the door. Long after, the two women sat together talking with pale, apprehensive faces.

"She won't come—I am sure of it as that I sit here," were Lady Helena's parting words as they separated. "I know her better than she does, and I am not carried away by his wild hopes. She will not come."

She Victor descended to breakfast, looking utterly pallid and haggard in the rather thin light. Well he might; he had not any good news more composed, calm, and serene, and there was almost a little hope as his heart as in Lady Helena's. Immediately after breakfast, Miss Catheron, closely veiled, entered the cab with him, and was driven to Oxford Street, where her silent driver, who was glad when it was over, and he set her down near the shop of Madame Mirbeau.

"I will wait here," he said. "If she will come with you, you will take a cab and drive back to Poplar Lodge. If she does not—return to me, and I will take you home."

She bent her head in assent, and entered the shop. Her own heart was beating at the thought of the coming interview and its probable ending. She advanced to the counter, and, without raising her veil, inquired if Miss Stuart had come.

The girl looked inquisitively at the hidden face, and answered, "Yes, Miss Stuart had come."

"I wish to see her particularly, and in private, for a few moments. Can you manage it for me?"

Miss Catheron walked over to the window; that nervous heart beat quicker than ever.

"You wish to see me, madame?" A clear, soft voice spoke. The door had quietly opened and a young girl entered.

Inez Catheron turned round, and for the second time in her life looked in the face of her cousin's wife.

Yes, it was his wife. The face she had seen under the trees of Poplars Place she saw again to-day in the London milliner's parlor. To her eyes there was no change; she had grown neither thinner or paler; she had lost none of the beauty and grace that had won away Sir Victor Catheron's heart.

"I wished to see you. We are not likely to be disturbed." "We are likely to be disturbed at any moment. It is the room where Madame Mirbeau tries on the dresses of her customers; and my time is very limited."

"Forgive me, Victor, forgive me, I ought not to have asked you that. But I did not mean—I know that can never be, my poor boy. I will do whatever you say. I will go to her, of course—I will fetch her here if she will come."

"If she will come!" he repeated hoarsely, disengaging himself from her; "what do you mean by it? There can be no 'if' in this matter. She is my wife—she is Lady Catheron—do you think she is to be left penniless and alone drugging for the bread she eats? I tell you, you must bring her, she must come!"

His passionate, suppressed excitement terrified her. In pain and fear and helplessness she looked at her niece. Inez, with that steady self-possession that is born of long and great endurance, came to her rescue at once.

"Sit down, Victor!" her full, firm tones said, "and don't work yourself up to this pitch of nervous excitement. It's folly and a sick-bed. About your wife, Aunt Helena will do what she can, but what can she do? You have a martyr—she is an unutterably painful to speak of this, but under the circumstances we must. She refused with scorn everything you offered her before; unless these past few months have greatly altered her, she will refuse again. She seems to have been a very proud, high-spirited girl, but her hard struggle with the world may have beaten down that—and—"

"Don't!" he cried passionately; "I can't bear it. O my God! to think what I have done—what I have done to her! I have made her a martyr—she must think of me—and that I live to bear it! To think I have endured it all, when a pistol-ball would have ended my torments any day!"

"When you talk such wicked folly as that," said Inez Catheron, her strong, steady eyes fixed upon his face, "I have no more to say to you. You did your duty once, and you did it like a hero, like a martyr—seems a pity to spoil it all by such a cowardly rant as this."

"My duty?" he exclaimed, huskily. "Was it my duty? Should I doubt it; sometimes I think if I had never left her, all might have been well. Was it my duty to make my life a hell on earth, or tear my heart from my bosom, as I did in the hour I left her, to spoil her life for her, to bring shame, reproach, and poverty upon her? If I had not left her, could the worst that might have happened be any worse than that?"

"Much worse—infinite worse. You are the sufferer, believe me, not she. What is all she has undergone in comparison with what you have endured? And she will know all, and love and honor you as you deserve."

He hid his face in his hands, and turned away from the light. "One day," he heard him murmur; "one day—the day of my death. Pray Heaven it may be soon."

"I think," Inez said and speak instead of Aunt Helena. She has undergone so much—she isn't able, believe me, Victor, to undergo more. Let me go to your wife; all Aunt Helena can say, all she can urge, I will. If it be in human power to bring her back, I will bring her. All I dare tell her, I will tell. But, after all, it is so little, and she is so proud. Don't hope too much."

"It is, and she is," he murmured again, his face still hidden; "so little, and there is so much to tell. Oh!" he broke forth, with a passionate cry, "I can't bear this much longer. If she will come for nothing else, she will come for the truth, and the truth shall be told. What are a thousand promises to the living or the dead to me? The knowledge that she lives and scorns me!"

They said nothing to him—they knew it was useless—they knew his paroxysms would pass, as so many others had passed, and that by to-morrow he would be the last to wish to tell.

"You will surely not think of returning to St. James Street to-night?" said Inez by way of diversion. "You will remain here, and at the earliest possible hour to-morrow will drive me to Oxford Street. I will do all I can—you believe that, my cousin, I now. And if—if I am successful, will you be so kind as to look at him—will you meet her, Victor?"

"I don't know yet; my head is in a whirl. To-night I feel as though I could do anything; brave anything—to-morrow I suppose I will feel differently. Don't ask me what I will do to-morrow until to-morrow comes. I will remain all night, and I will go to my room at once; I feel dazed and half sick. Good-night."

He left them abruptly. They heard him toll wearily up to his room and lock the door. Long after, the two women sat together talking with pale, apprehensive faces.

"She won't come—I am sure of it as that I sit here," were Lady Helena's parting words as they separated. "I know her better than she does, and I am not carried away by his wild hopes. She will not come."

She Victor descended to breakfast, looking utterly pallid and haggard in the rather thin light. Well he might; he had not any good news more composed, calm, and serene, and there was almost a little hope as his heart as in Lady Helena's. Immediately after breakfast, Miss Catheron, closely veiled, entered the cab with him, and was driven to Oxford Street, where her silent driver, who was glad when it was over, and he set her down near the shop of Madame Mirbeau.

"I will wait here," he said. "If she will come with you, you will take a cab and drive back to Poplar Lodge. If she does not—return to me, and I will take you home."

She bent her head in assent, and entered the shop. Her own heart was beating at the thought of the coming interview and its probable ending. She advanced to the counter, and, without raising her veil, inquired if Miss Stuart had come.

The girl looked inquisitively at the hidden face, and answered, "Yes, Miss Stuart had come."

"I wish to see her particularly, and in private, for a few moments. Can you manage it for me?"

ed reply; but there was that about Edith that saved her from open insult—a dignity and a distance that none of them could overreach. Besides, she was a favorite with the madame and the forewoman. So silently, industriously, so tastefully neat, so perfectly trustworthy in her work. Her companions disliked and distrusted her. It was said of her from them all; she had something on her mind—there was an air of mystery about her; they doubted her being an English girl at all. No, Sir Victor Catheron; if she had a secret she kept it well; in their noisy, busy world she was as much alone as if she were on Robinson Crusoe's island. Outwardly those ten months had changed her little—her brilliant dress, beauty was scarcely dimmed—inwardly it had changed her greatly, and hardly for the better.

Madame's young women were detained half an hour later than usual that evening. A great Belgravia ball came off next night, and there was a glut of work. They got away at last, half-fagged to death, only to find a dull drizzling rain setting down over the gas-lit highways of London. Miss Stuart bade her companions a brief good-night, raised her umbrella, and hurried on her way. She did not observe the waiting figure, muffled from the rain and hidden by an umbrella, that had been waiting for her, and who instantly followed her steps. She hurried on and came to a part of the street where it was necessary she should cross. She passed an omnibus and a stone ironside. Cabs, omnibuses and hansoms were tearing by in numbers. It was a perilous passage. She waited two or three minutes, but there was no hall in the rush. The rain was so desperate in her impatience she started to cross. The crossing was slippery and wet. "I say! look out there, will you!" half a dozen shrill cables called, before and behind.

She grew bewildered—her presence of mind deserted her—she dropped her umbrella and held up her hands in a vain effort to grasp her. She felt herself absolutely lifted off her feet, and carried over. But just as the curbstone was reached, something—a carriage pole it appeared—checked her career on the head, and fell him to the ground. As he fell, Edith sprang lightly out of his arms, and stood on the pavement, unharmed.

The man had fallen. A crowd surrounded the prostrate man. For Edith, she stood stunned and bewildered still. She saw the man lifted and carried into a chemist's near by. Instinctively she followed—it was in saving her he had come to grief. She saw him placed in a chair, the mire and blood washed off his face, and then—was she stunned and stupefied still or was it the face of Sir Victor Catheron?

She leaned heavily against the counter, feeling giddy and sick—the place swimming around her. Was he dead? Had it been his death trying to save her? "Blessed if I don't think he's dead and done for," said the chemist. "It ain't such a bad job, neither. I say! does anybody know who he is?"

Nobody knew. Then the keen eyes of a policeman, X 2001, fell upon Edith, pale and wild-looking, with evident terror and recognition in her face.

"I say, miss, you know, don't you?" Bobby suggested politely. "It was risky, this ere get, don't you, miss! Who he is?"

"He is Sir Victor Catheron."

"Oh," said Bobby, "Sir Victor Catheron, is he? I thought he was a heavy swell."

"I don't know," said Edith, "but he was handsome face, and very plain dress, and evident station, and he formed his own surmise. 'Perhaps now, miss, you know, too, where he ought to be to-night?'"

"No," she answered mechanically; "I don't know. If you search his pockets, you will most likely find his address. You—, you don't really think he is dead, do you?"

"Well, no, miss, I don't," said the chemist answered, "though I must say he looks uncommon like it. Here's his card-case—now let's see; 'Sir Victor Catheron, Bart, F.R.S.'—her name is Edith, is it?—and he's herder a cab and 'ave him driven there."

"Somebody ought to go with him," said X 2001. "I can't go—you can't go. I don't suppose now, Edith, you can't go doubtfully at Edith, 'you can't go nuther?'"

"Is it necessary?" Edith asked, with very visible reluctance. "Well, you see, miss he looks uncommon like a stiff 'un this minute, and if he was to die by the way or hankything, and him halone go," interposed Edith, turning away with a sick shudder. "Call the cab at once."

A four-wheeler was summoned—the insensible young baronet was put out and laid, as comfortably as might be, on the back seat. Edith followed, unutterably against her will, but how was she to help it? He was her worst enemy, but even to one's worst enemy, one has duties. Sometimes must be shown. It would be brutal to let him go alone.

"Don't you be afraid, miss," the chemist said cheerfully; "he ain't dead, he's only stunned like, and will come round all right directly."

"Fenton's, Bill," and the cab rattled off.

CHAPTER XXIV. That ride—all her life it came back to her like a bad nightmare. She kept her eyes turned away at Lady Helena's countenance from that rigid form and ghastly face opposite, but in spite of herself they would wander back. What Miss Catheron had said was true then—she was a martyr—she was pictured in his face. What if, after all, there was some secret strong enough to make his conduct in leaving her right? She had thought it over and wondered and wondered until her head ached, and she could never hit on any solution. She could not now—it was not right. Whatever the secret was, he had known it before he married her—why had he not told her then? why in leaving her after that had he not explained? There was no excuse for him, none, and in spite of the white, worn face that pleaded for him, her heart hardened once more—hardened until she felt neither pity nor pain.

They reached the hotel, Jamison, the valet, came down, and recoiled at the sight of his master's long hair.

"My lady!" he faltered, staring as though he had seen a ghost. "Your master has met with an accident, Jamison. Edith said nothing, ignoring the title. How oddly it fell from her lips! She had better have him conveyed to his room and send for a surgeon. And, if Lady Helena is in town—"

"Will—?" Jamison hesitated, "will you come in, my lady, and wait until her ladyship comes?"

For a moment Edith hesitated and thought. It would be necessary for some one to explain—she could not go away either without knowing whether the injury was fatal or not, since that injury was her own. She set her lips and alighted.

"I will remain until Lady Helena arrives. For now no time is sending for her."

She went immediately, my lady," answered Jamison respectfully. "I will be a waiter, 'show this lady to a parlor at once."

And then Edith found herself following a gentlemanly sort of man down a carpeted long hall, up a grand staircase, along an carpeted corridor, and into an elegant private

parlor. The man lit the gas and went, and then she was alone.

"What a wretch I am," she thought; "what a vile creature I must be. If he dies, I shall feel as though I murdered him."

How long the hours and half hours, told off on the clock, seemed—eight, nine, ten—would Lady Helena never come? It was half past ten, and tired out, she had fallen into a sort of uneasy sleep, and a fitful dream in her chair when she suddenly became half conscious of some one near her. She had been dreaming of Sandy-point, of quarrelling with her cousin. "Don't," she said petulantly, aloud, and the sound of her own voice awoke her fully. She started up, bewildered for a second, and found herself face to face with Lady Helena. Lady Helena had been watching Edith for the past five minutes silently and sadly. It was of him then she was dreaming—thoughts of him had brought to her lips that happy smile. The heart of the elder woman contracted with a sharp sense of pain.

"Lady Helena."

"Edith."

"I—I think I fell asleep," Edith said confusedly; "I was very tired, and it all seemed so quiet and tedious here. How is the matter with you?"

"Better and asleep—they gave him an opiate. He knows nothing of your being here. It was very good of you to come, my dear."

"It was nothing more than a duty of common humanity. It was impossible to avoid coming," Edith answered, and then briefly and coldly she narrated how the accident had taken place.

"My poor boy!" was all Lady Helena said, but there was a heart sob in every word; "the world did nothing to save you; it let you inflict the worst pain of your life. My poor child, you can't understand, and we can't explain—it must seem very hard to you. It is known only to Heaven and you will know all, and you will do him justice at last. Ah, Edith! if you had not refused Inez—if only you were not so proud, if only you had not been so vain, if only you might bear this separation until Heaven's good time. As it is, it is killing him."

"He looks very ill," Edith said; "what the matter with him?"

"Heart disease—brought on by mental suffering. No words can tell what he has undergone since his most miserable wedding-day. It is known only to Heaven and you will know all, and you will do him justice at last. Ah, Edith! if you had not refused Inez—if only you were not so proud, if only you might bear this separation until Heaven's good time. As it is, it is killing him."

"Go home! At this hour? Most certainly you will not. You will remain here all night. Oh, Edith, you must indeed. A room has been prepared for you adjoining mine. I have and Jamison with Victor until morning, and—you ought to see him before you go."

She shrank in a sort of horror. "No, no! that I cannot. As it is so late I will remain, but see him—no, no! Not even for your sake, Lady Helena, can I do that."

"We will wait until to-morrow comes," was Lady Helena's response; "now you shall go to your room at once."

She rang the bell, a chambermaid came. Lady Helena kissed the girl's pale cheek affectionately, and then she went away. The room she was to occupy for that night.

"Who can tell what a day may bring forth?" was Edith's thought as she looked at her husband on her pillow. "I am glad—very glad, that the accident will not prove fatal. I don't want him or anyone else to come to his death through me."

She was up and asleep, and awoke late. She sprang out of bed almost instantly and dressed. Before her toilet was quite completed there was a tap at the door. She opened it and saw Miss Catheron.

"I fancied you would be up early, and ordered breakfast accordingly. Aunt Helena awaits you down stairs. How did you sleep?"

"Very well. And you—you were up all night I suppose?"

"Yes. I don't mind it at all, though—I am quite used to night watching. As to the reward of knowing Victor is much better—entirely out of danger, indeed. Edith," she laid her hands on the girl's shoulders and looked down into her eyes, "she was up and asleep, and awoke late. She sprang out of bed almost instantly and dressed. Before her toilet was quite completed there was a tap at the door. She opened it and saw Miss Catheron."

"I can grant nothing—nothing," Edith said with agitation.

"You will grant this, I think," the other answered sadly. "Come, dear child, let us go down to Lady Helena's room. She is waiting for you."

They descended to breakfast; Edith ate little. In spite of herself, in spite of her pride and self-command, it shook her. She said was true then—she was a martyr—she was pictured in his face. What if, after all, there was some secret strong enough to make his conduct in leaving her right? She had thought it over and wondered and wondered until her head ached, and she could never hit on any solution. She could not now—it was not right. Whatever the secret was, he had known it before he married her—why had he not told her then? why in leaving her after that had he not explained? There was no excuse for him, none, and in spite of the white, worn face that pleaded for him, her heart hardened once more—hardened until she felt neither pity nor pain.

"I do insist," answered Inez, steadily. "Come."

She led her to a door down the corridor that opened into a room. Edith's heart beat; she started herself for it. The door opened, and the grave, professional face of Mr. Jamison looked out.

"Tell Sir Victor, Lady Catheron is here, and will see him in five minutes."

The man bowed and departed. Another instant and he was again before them: "Sir Victor begs my lady to enter at once. Inez Catheron looks for her in her arms and kisses her. It was her husband. She passed forward and hurried away. Edith went to her room. She opened the door, and her husband and wife were face to face. He lay upon a low sofa—the room was naturally dark, but in that semi-darkness she could see that he looked quite as ghastly and bloodless this morning as he had last night. She gazed almost half an hour down the room and spoke: "You wished to see me, Sir Victor Catheron?"

You hate me, and I deserve your hate, out oh! if you knew, even you would have mercy and relent."

"He touched her in spite of herself. Even a heart of stone might have softened at the sound of that despairing, heart-wrung voice—at the sight of that death-like, tortured face. And Edith's, whatever she might say or think, was not a heart of stone."

"I do pity you," she said very gently; "I never thought so—but from my soul I do. But, forgive me, No, Sir Victor Catheron; I am only mortal. I have been wronged and humiliated as no girl was ever wronged and humiliated before. I can't do that."

He covered his face with his hands—she could hear the dry sobbing sound of his wordless misery.

"I would have been better if I had not come here," she said still gently. "You are ill, and this excitement will make you worse. But he insisted upon it—he said you had a request to make. I think you had better make it—make it—can grant nothing—nothing."

"You will grant this," he answered, lifting his face and using the words which she had said to him. "I am dying, and send for me on my death-bed, you will come to me. Before I die I must tell you in life; and then, oh surely, surely, my darling, leave me this one hope, give me this one promise before you go."

"I promise to come," he said; "I promise to come. A week ago I thought I would have died sooner than pledge myself to that much—sooner than look in your face, or see you go to your room. And now, Sir Victor Catheron, farewell."

"She turned to go without waiting for his reply. As she opened the door, she heard a wailing cry that struck chill with pity and terror to her inmost heart.

"Oh, my love! my bride! my wife!"—then the door closed behind her—she heard and saw no more.

She passed out into the sunshine and splendor of the summer morning, dashed and dead, her whole soul full of untold compassion for the man she had left.

CHAPTER XXV. Edith went back to the work-room in Oxford Street, to the old treadmill life of ceaseless sewing, and once more, a full year ago, she was in the same room, preceding the last-ending of this strange mystery that had wrecked two lives a hundred times a day that pallid, tortured face, rose before her, that last agonized cry of a strong heart in strong agony rang in her ears. All her hatred, all her revengeful thoughts of him were gone—she understood him no better than before, but she pitied him from the depths of her heart. They disturbed her no more, neither by letters or visits. Only as the weeks went by she noticed this—that as surely as evening came, a shadowy figure hovering aloof, faded and worn-out, he seemed to be fitted for the sick-bed than the role of a protector.

July—August passed—the middle of September came. All this time, whatever the weather, she never once missed her "shadow" from his post. As we grow accustomed to all things, she grew accustomed to this watchful care, grew to look for him when the day's work was done. But in the middle of September she missed him. Evening after evening came, and she returned home unlooked and alone. Something had happened, had happened! He had never really held up his head after that second parting with Edith. For days he had lain prostrate, so near to death that they thought he had passed away. But by the end of a week he was better—as much better at least as he would be in this world.

But Nature, defied long, claimed her penance at last. The calm day when Sir Victor could rise from his bed no more, when the heart spasms, in their anguish, grew even more than his resolute will could bear. A day when in dire alarm Lady Helena and Inez were once more summoned by faithful Jamison, and when at last—at last the infallible German doctor was sent for.

"I will interview between physician and patient was long and strictly private. When Herr Von Werten went away at last his phlegmatic Teuton face was set with an unworded expression of pity and pain. After an interval of almost unendurable suspense, Lady Helena was sent for by her nephew to be told the result. He lay upon a low sofa, wheeled near the window. The last light of the September day streamed in and fell full upon his face—perhaps that was what glorified it and gave it such a radiant look. A faint smile lingered on his lips, his eyes had a far-off, dreamy look, and were fixed on the rosy evening sky. A strange, unearthly, exalted heart altogether, that made his aunt's heart sink like stone."

"Well," she said in a tense sort of whisper, longing for, yet dreading the reply. He turned to her, that smile still on his lips, still in his eyes. He had not looked so well for months. He took her hand.

"Aunt," he said, "you have heard of doomed men sentenced to death receive their reprieve at the last hour? I think I know—today how those men must feel. My reprieve has come."

"Victor!" it was a gasp. "Dr. Von Werten says you will recover?"

"His eyes turned from her to that far-off brightness in the September sky. It is a surmise of the heart. Dr. Von Werten says I won't live three weeks."

They were down in Cheahire. They had taken him home by slow and easy stages. They took him to Catheron Royals—it was his wish, and they lived but to gratify his wishes now.

The grand old house was at it had been left a year ago—fitted up resplendently for a bride—a bride who had never come. There was one particular room to which he had been taken—a spacious and sumptuous chamber, all purple and gold, and they laid him upon the bed, from which he would never rise.

It was the close of September now, the days golden and mellow, beautiful with the rich beauty of early autumn, before decay had come. He had grown rapidly weaker since that memorable interview with the German doctor. His lower limbs were paralyzed. The end was very near now. On the last day of September Herr Von Werten paid his last visit.

"It is of no use, madame," he said to Lady Helena; "I can do nothing—nothing whatever. He won't last the week out. The young baronet has lost his senses, eye, scarce at last with the awful severity that preceded the end. He had heard the flat note intended for his ears."

"I am so sorry to see you in this state, my dear," said the doctor. "I will do my best, but I am afraid it is of no use. He has lost his senses, eye, scarce at last with the awful severity that preceded the end. He had heard the flat note intended for his ears."

"It is impossible, Sir Victor. I always tell my patients the truth. The young baronet has lost his senses, eye, scarce at last with the awful severity that preceded the end. He had heard the flat note intended for his ears."

"I will do my best, but I am afraid it is of no use. He has lost his senses, eye, scarce at last with the awful severity that preceded the end. He had heard the flat note intended for his ears."

"I will do my best, but I am afraid it is of no use. He has lost his senses, eye, scarce at last with the awful severity that preceded the end. He had heard the flat note intended for his ears."

"I will do my best, but I am afraid it is of no use. He has lost his senses, eye, scarce at last with the awful severity that preceded the end. He had heard the flat note intended for his ears."

What is CASTORIA

Castoria is Dr. Samuel Pitcher's prescription for Infants and Children. It contains neither Opium, Morphine nor other Narcotic substance. It is a harmless substitute for Paregoric, Drops, Soothing Syrup, and Castor Oil. It is Pleasant.