

am sure. You have some knowledge——”

“No; no knowledge, I assure you——”

“A suspicion then, a fear. I saw it in your face when we met, and hear it now in your voice. Besides you were not surprised to see me out at this early hour, alone.” She looked at him with appeal.

“Don't hesitate to hurt me. I am not afraid of pain——” Her lips twitched. “I have met it before—and—besides——” she was half suffocating with emotion he could see, “I think I know.” Her voice was only just audible. “You do not expect my brother to return to me?”

Her eyes were brilliant with a strange light as they held his. A tide of compassion swept over him, the strong mind with its tenacious holding on and propping up of the weak, but loved brother, had worn her body to frailty. She stood on a small mound directly in front of him, her grey gown clinging to her girlish form, her personality giving an intense meaning to the solitary scene. She might have so stood on the grave of all her joy, independently of support, demanding still the truth of life, whatever it might be.

She would not cry out, or faint, or make ado; indeed, she put his own fears into words.

“Frank will not return; we need not wait for him,” she said, moving as she spoke slowly towards home. “I felt that all night while I waited. As you saw, he had lost—control. Once during the night I heard him cry out to me; he never does that unless his suffering is intolerable.”

Howard was watching her closely. She looked straight in front of her; her face was pinched and old. Had the night's suspense made her delirious? But her

voice was quite natural as she added:

“I wish I could know whether he called me from *this* side or the *other*.”

“Of the river?”

A quiver passed over her face. She turned and looked at her companion. “Of life.”

“Dear Miss Osmoud, is it not premature to take this hopeless view? He may be even now waiting breakfast for you at The Whare?”

She shook her head. “Sometimes one *knows*—it is idle then to conjecture. How you know I shall ask you presently. My knowledge is not of fact; it is of another sort—intuitive, but I am sure that Frank has *gone*. Where, how far, whether he is alive or what you call dead (and what I call living in another sphere) I do not know—of one thing I am sure—*he has let his hold go of me*.”

“How is it possible for you to tell?” exclaimed Howard, surprised into astonished tones.

“I can feel it. It is quite natural. I have lived for and with Frank—mentally with him—so long that I know he has cut me adrift. It is quite natural,” she repeated, “it is simply the sympathy which is the basis of true relationship, and according to nature. Don't you remember the words of the Teacher in the crowd when he felt virtue—magnetism, strength—go out of Him—*who touched Me?* We always know!”

How utterly worn out and tired, body and heart, she was, Howard understood when they reached the cottage door, and she stretched out her hand and felt by the wall of the porch as one blind, groping her way into the familiar room.

