

sure, dear Miss Colwyn—and that you could not return with me when you were so much wanted."

"I am afraid I am not much wanted," said Janetta, with a sigh; "but I daresay it is my duty to go home—"

"I am sure it is," Lady Caroline declared; "and duty is so high and holy a thing, dear, that you will never regret the performance of it."

It occurred dimly to Janetta at that point that Lady Caroline's views of duty might possibly differ from her own; but she did not venture to say so.

"And, of course, you will never repeat to Margaret—"

Lady Caroline did not complete her sentence. The coachman suddenly checked the horses's speed: for some unknown reason he actually stopped short in the very middle of the country road between Helmsley Court and Beaminster. His mistress uttered a little cry of alarm.

"What is the matter, Steel?"

The footman dismounted and touched his hat.

"I am afraid there has been an accident, my lady," he said, as apologetically, as if he were responsible for the accident.

"Oh! Nothing horrible, I hope!" said Lady Caroline, drawing out her smelling-bottle.

"It's a carriage accident, my lady. Leastways, a cab. The 'orse is lying right across the road, my lady."

"Speak to the people, Steel," said her ladyship, with great dignity. "They must not be allowed to block up the road in this way."

"May I get out?" said Janetta, eagerly. "There is a lady lying on the path, and some people bathing her face. Now they are lifting her up—I am sure they ought not to lift her up in that way—oh, please, I must go just for one minute!" And, without waiting for a reply, she stepped, out of the victoria and sped to the side of the woman who had been hurt.

"Very impulsive and undisciplined," said Lady Caroline to herself, as she leaned back and held the smelling-bottle to her own delicate nose. "I am glad I have got her out of the house so soon. Those men were wild about her singing. Sir Philip disapproved of her presence, but he was charmed by her voice, I could see that; and poor, dear Reginald was positively absurd about her voice. And dear Margaret does *not* sing so well—it is no use pretending that she does—and Sir Philip is trembling on the verge—oh, yes, am sure that I have been very wise. What is that girl doing now?"

