

He hummed and ha'd a little at that. It was plain that I had driven him into a corner.

"I don't suppose it is good for her," he said rather gruffly. "I don't believe it is good for anybody; but she must just get used to it as other people do. Get her over here as much as possible, and make her take an interest in things. I told her to-day that she ought to be proud of her new sister-in-law, for all the neighbourhood is singing her praises and saying what a charming woman she is, and Miss Mostyn only looked as prim as possible and said she was glad to hear it. Oh, you women, Berrie—you are kittle cattle most of you!" and Dr. Hoskin shook his head knowingly as he stepped into his gig.

He was a humourist in his way, and a little rough and ready in speech, especially to strangers; but we all loved him for his real goodness of heart, and as for his poorer patients, they fairly worshipped him. He would go without his dinner or his night's rest for the poorest body in the hamlet if he thought he could do any good.

Dr. Hoskin was a skilled physician and a great blessing to Wyngate, but he had small sympathy with fads, or what I have heard him call a fine lady's vapours. That is how he gave offence to Lady Grimston up at The Towers, for he could not tolerate her fat pug dog, and hustled him aside as though he were the veriest street cur; and when she wanted him to order her to the Riviera for the winter, he just told her plainly that there was nothing the matter with her, and that she might just as well stay at home and look after Sir Rupert. We heard after that that she had sent for Dr. Pennyfeather. Any way, she had her will, and went off to Mentone with her maid and her pug Chérie, and I am afraid few of us pitied her as we ought when poor Sir Rupert died so suddenly in her absence, taking everybody but Dr. Hoskin by surprise.

"Hang that woman!" I actually heard him say with my own ears. "Why could she not have stayed at home and looked after the poor fellow? And I had told her pretty plainly what I feared."

But even Dr. Hoskin relented when the stricken woman hurried back to her desolate home, a prey to acute remorse. I knew Mrs. Marland and Mrs. Mostyn took turns in going to The Towers daily, and that Mrs. Mostyn especially was a comfort to her. As it happened, poor Mrs. Mostyn was the one who bore the brunt of Miss Faith's displeasure. This was rather hard on her, as she was quite innocent of conniving at Dr. Hoskin's visit; but you could not have got Miss Faith to believe that.

Hope came to me with rather a rueful face after luncheon.

"I don't think I shall go and see Aunt Faith this afternoon," she said in a dubious tone. "Brenda has been catching it nicely this morning. Aunt Faith is deeply offended with us all, but she evidently considers Brenda is the chief culprit, though, poor dear, she knew nothing about Dr. Hoskin's visit to Nutlands until he came here. She says he only laughed at her, and that we have all exposed her to this humiliation. 'I suppose I am old enough to know when I want a doctor,' she said to Brenda—you know Aunt Faith's grand way, Berrie—and can send for him myself, so I am at a loss to know why you and my brother have put yourselves to all this trouble.' Brenda says she felt quite cheap and small."

"I think I ought to go in your place, Hope, my dear," I returned briskly. "It is only fair, as I am the real culprit, for Mr. Mostyn would never have thought of such a thing if I had not warned him so about Miss Faith." But Hope would not have this for a moment. I had only done rightly, she remarked. Brenda thought her aunt looking extremely ill, quite shrunk and dwindled, and however Dr. Hoskin might pooh-pooh things, it was quite evident that he thought that she needed plenty of attention, for he had given heaps of instructions to Burton. She was to have nourishment frequently, and to go to bed early, and to walk or drive every day.

Hope wanted me to put off my visit for a day, but I was never one to shirk an unpleasant duty. Even when I was a child, I liked to face my boogys instead

of cowering under the bed-clothes, but that does not prove that I was any braver than my fellows. It so happened that I was unusually busy that day, and it was nearly six before I started for Nutlands, but I knew my way so well that I did not mind the darkness a bit.

As I walked up the garden path, I could see the firelight playing on the windows in a fitful sort of way, but there was no pleasant glow of lamplight. Perhaps Miss Faith was dozing in the twilight. I exchanged a few words with Burton. Her mistress was but poorly, she said. Then she shrugged her shoulders with a meaning look as she opened the parlour door.

The blaze had died down a little, and I had to grope my way to the fireplace. As I stumbled over a stool, Miss Faith asked in rather a fretful tone why Burton had not lighted the lamp. She had been asleep, she said, and had just awoke; but I knew very well that Burton had not been in fault, and that Miss Faith herself had refused to have the lamp lighted.

So I took no notice of her complaint, but stirred the fire and threw on another log. Then I kindled the lamp and closed the curtains, and the room looked as snug as possible; but as I sat down beside Miss Faith, my old trouble of mind returned. It seemed to me that even in these few hours her face had grown smaller and more pinched, and there was a strained, pitiful look in her eyes. Perhaps she read my face, for before I could open my lips, she suddenly held out her hands to me.

"Berrie, dear Berrie, help me to bear it," she pleaded. "What shall I do? What can I do? It is not my fault; I was made so. But I cannot live alone—I cannot—I cannot; and yet I would rather die than go back to Wildcroft," and then she broke in piteous sobs until my heart ached to hear her. Ah, what poor creatures we are! Was it not Solomon who said, "A wounded spirit who can heal?" Truly "the heart knoweth its own bitterness." Human sympathy is sweet, but there is only One who can really help us to carry our burden when we are ready to faint under it.

(To be continued.)



COLLAR OF STEEL BEADS AND VELVET.

A shaped collar of black velvet embroidered with dull and glittering steel beads. A graduated fringe of the same finishes it off.